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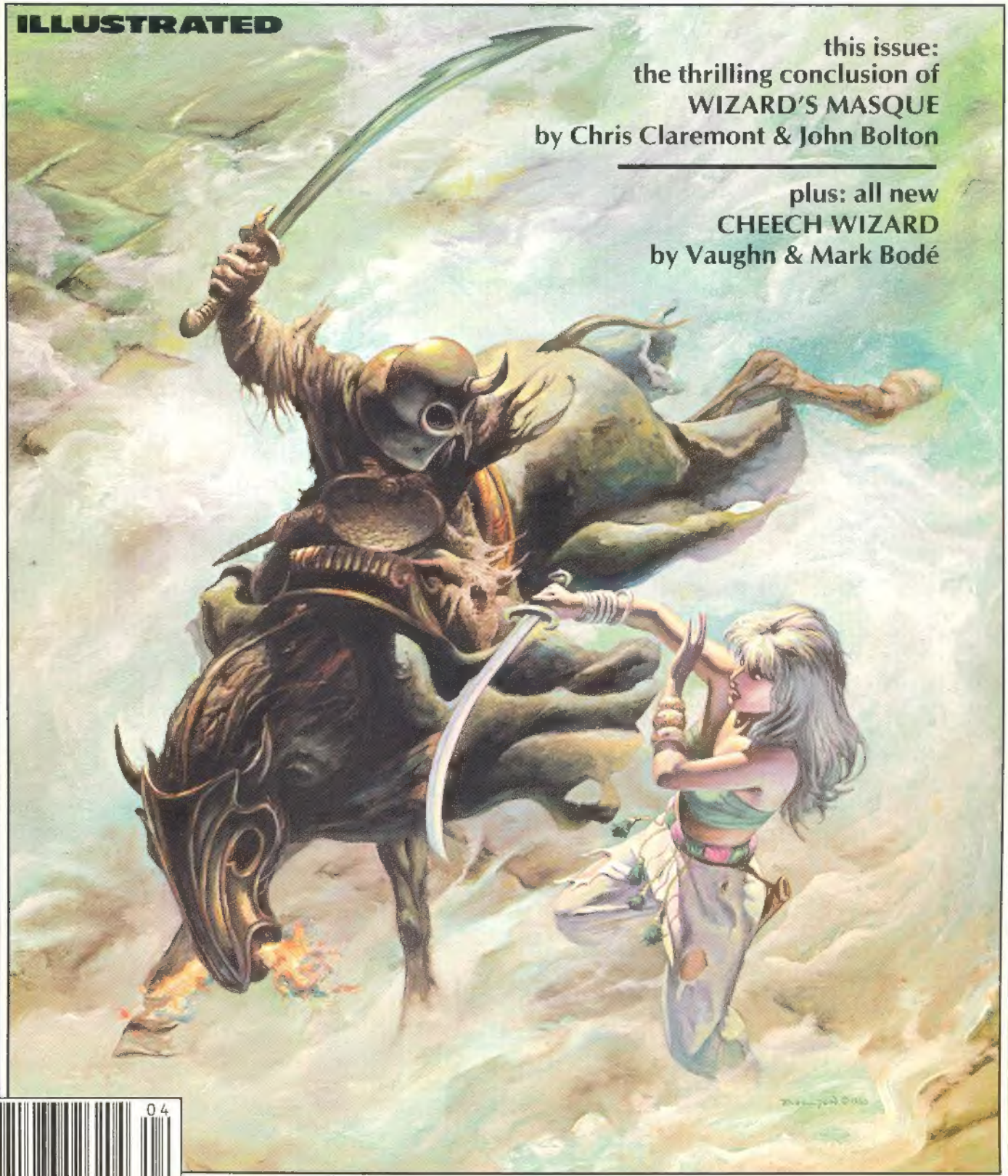

this issue:
the thrilling conclusion of
WIZARD'S MASQUE
by Chris Claremont & John Bolton

plus: all new
CHEECH WIZARD
by Vaughn & Mark Bodé

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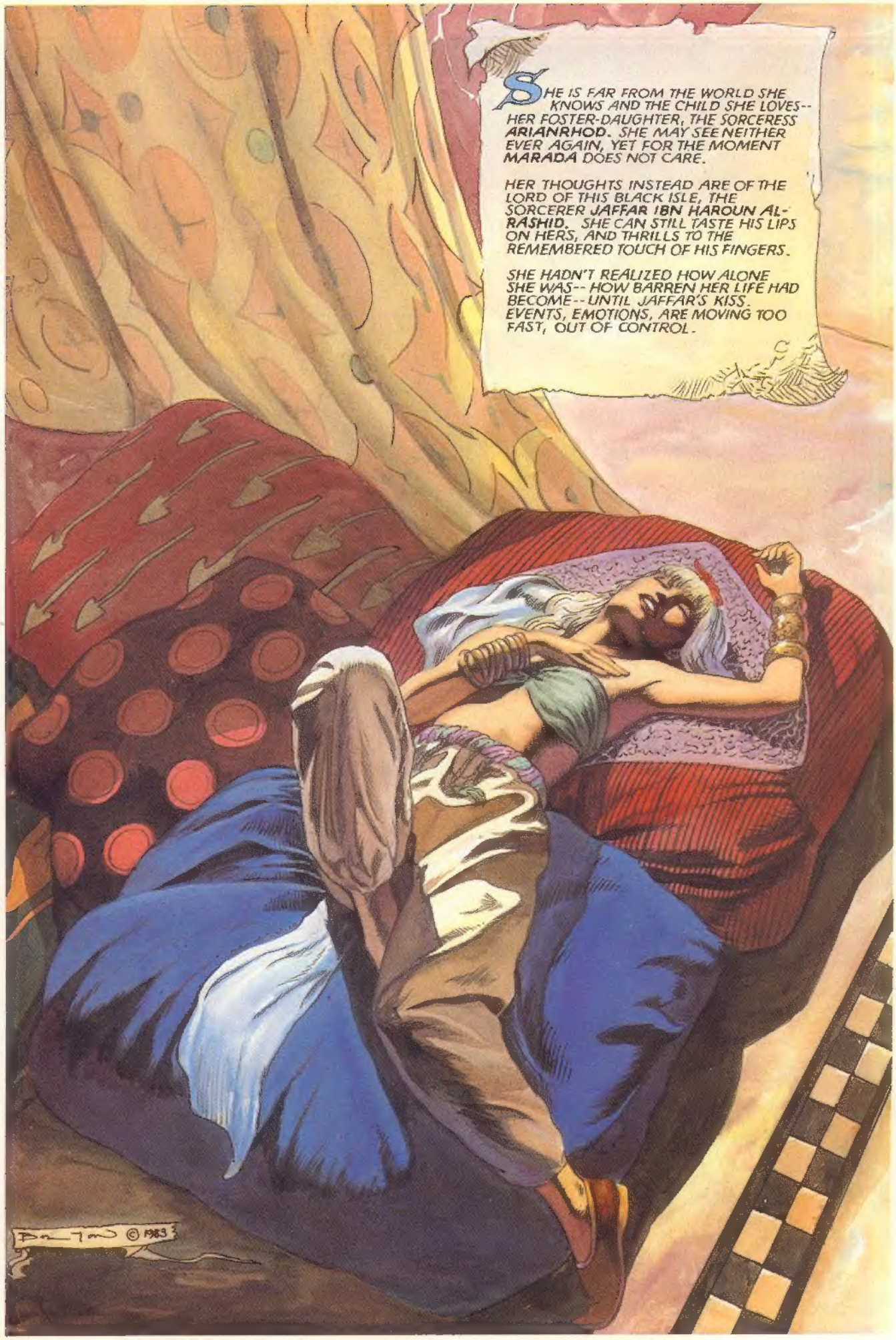
MARADA
THE SHE-WOLF

Her mother was the first-born of Caesar. Her father, a prince in his own land, a slave in Rome. At the age of four, Marada saw her father broken on the rack, disembowelled and, finally, drawn and quartered. It was a public execution and, though the Prince was a long time dying, he uttered not a sound. That night, Marada's mother fled the Eternal City, taking her child to be raised free, far from the place that had claimed the life of her beloved. That was twenty years ago. The child is a woman now, and that woman a warrior known and respected throughout the Empire.

During her travels as a mercenary, Marada ran afoul of the Mabdhara — a triad of demonlords — who perceived in her great mystic potential. One of them, Y'Garon, carried her off by force and ravished her. An old friend, Donal MacIlynllwyr, warlord of the fabled magical fortress Ashandriar, rescued Marada and offered her the protection of his home. She spent almost a year amid the safety of Donal's family, but in the end, the Mabdhara found her there. In the battle that followed, Donal was killed, and his daughter — the child-sorceress Arianrhod — was carried off to Y'Garon's domain. Marada followed and killed the demonlord, avenging Donal and rescuing Ari. The pair returned to earth, to a point thousands of miles from Ashandriar.

In her impatience to return home, Arianrhod attempted a spell of teleportation which went awry, flinging Marada alone through space, to a pirate ship a world away. The pirates, respecting her fighting skills, brought the She-Wolf to the island of Jaffar Ibn Haroun Al-Rashid, a sorcerer whom she hoped would be able to send her back to Ari. Jaffar turned out to be both young and attractive, more than willing to help and please Marada. Unfortunately for them both, he is in the service of the Mabdhara, who still want the She-Wolf's life.


SHE IS FAR FROM THE WORLD SHE KNOWS AND THE CHILD SHE LOVES--HER FOSTER-DAUGHTER, THE SORCERESS ARIANRHOD. SHE MAY SEE NEITHER EVER AGAIN, YET FOR THE MOMENT MARADA DOES NOT CARE.
HER THOUGHTS INSTEAD ARE OF THE LORD OF THIS BLACK ISLE, THE SORCERER JAFFAR IBN HAROUN AL-RASHID. SHE CAN STILL TASTE HIS LIPS ON HERS, AND THRILLS TO THE REMEMBERED TOUCH OF HIS FINGERS.
SHE HADN'T REALIZED HOW ALONE SHE WAS--HOW BARREN HER LIFE HAD BECOME--UNTIL JAFFAR'S KISS. EVENTS, EMOTIONS, ARE MOVING TOO FAST, OUT OF CONTROL.
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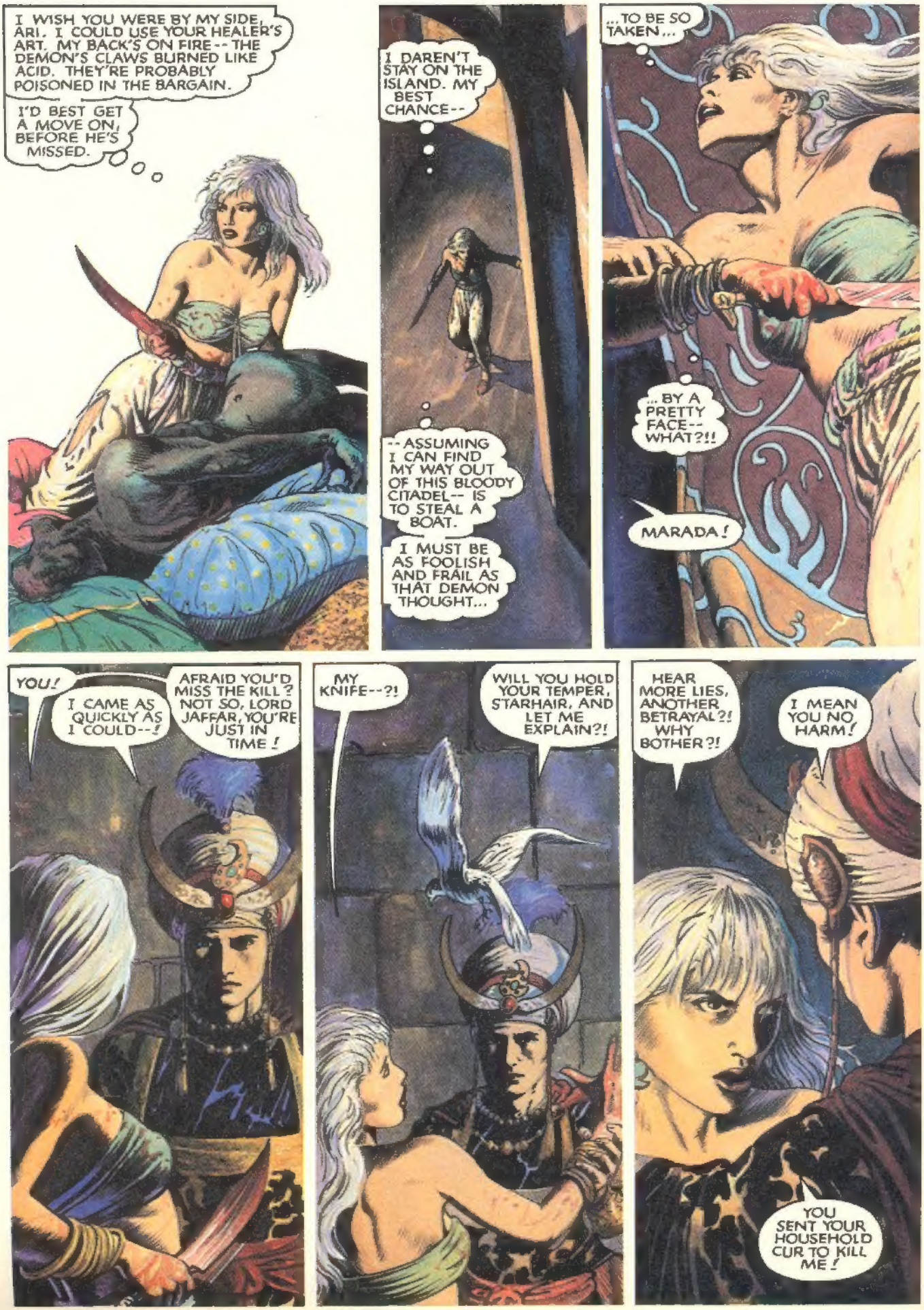
WHAT LUXURY-- NOT EVEN CAESAR'S ROME CAN COMPARE WITH THIS.
I MUST ADMIT, IT MAKES A LOVELY CHANGE FROM THE PRIVATIONS OF A MERCENARY'S LIFE.
WEARING SILK INSTEAD OF LEATHER AND STEEL, SLEEPING ON PLUSH PILLOWS RATHER THAN AN OPEN FIELD, DINING ON FINE FOOD AND WINE, NOT GARBAGE AND ROTGUT. I COULD EASILY BECOME ADDICTED TO SUCH PAMPERING.
AND, LIKE ALL ADDICTIONS, IT COULD DESTROY ME.
I DON'T BELONG HERE.
I MADE MYSELF A WARRIOR-- BUT I WAS BORN A PRINCESS. WAS I WRONG TO SO COMPLETELY ABANDON MY HERITAGE? ARE THESE MY TRUE FEELINGS WHICH MAKE ME SUDDENLY DOUBT MYSELF, OR JAFFAR'S INFERNAL WIZARDRY?!
DAMNATION, WHERE IS THE MAN--
BLESSED GODDESS!
THY RECKONING IS AT HAND, SHE-WOLF!

A BLOOD DEBT EXISTS BETWEEN THEE AND THE DREAD LORDS OF THE ABYSS, THE MABDHARA!
THIS NIGHT IT SHALL BE PAID!
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN Y'GARON'S BRETHREN...
... WOULD NEVER FORGET, OR FORGIVE ME FOR HIS DEATH!
MY LEG-- TANGLED IN MY VEIL!

THY REPUTATION IS MOST FEARSOME, SHE-WOLF, BUT THOU SEEM'ST TO ME BUT A FRAIL WOMAN FIT MORE FOR BED THAN BATTLE.
I'LL WAGER 'TWAS THY WITCH-CHILD STRUCK DOWN THE TRIAD LORD--
WHOUNFF!
WHY DON'T YOU ASK HIM, LITTLE MONSTER...
...WHEN I SEND YOU TO HIS SIDE...
...IN THE COLDEST PIT OF HELL?
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO JAFFAR?!
SURELY, A MAGE SUCH AS HE MUST KNOW WHEN HIS CITADEL'S BEEN BREACHED-- UNLESS, THE MABDHARA ARE ATTACKING HIM AS WELL...
DOST HOPE FOR AID, HUMAN?
IT SHALL NOT COME. THE SORCERER JAFFAR al-RASHID IS NO FRIEND TO THEE. AS I AM HIS CREATURE-- GIVEN LIFE BY HIS BLACK ARTS TO SMITE HIS ENEMIES--
--SO IS HE A SERVANT OF THE MABDHARA!

THAT SON OF A BITCH! DID YOU LAUGH, WIZARD...
...AT HOW EASILY I LET MYSELF BE LED TO THE SLAUGHTER?!
POOR MARADA. MY LORD'S BETRAYAL MUST HURT INDEED, TO MAKE THEE SO CLUMSY.
I'LL SURVIVE HELLSPAWN.
THAT'S MORE THAN CAN BE SAID FOR YOU!


I WISH YOU WERE BY MY SIDE, ARI. I COULD USE YOUR HEALER'S ART. MY BACK'S ON FIRE -- THE DEMON'S CLAWS BURNED LIKE ACID. THEY'RE PROBABLY POISONED IN THE BARGAIN.
I'D BEST GET A MOVE ON, BEFORE HE'S MISSED.
I DAREN'T STAY ON THE ISLAND. MY BEST CHANCE--
-- ASSUMING I CAN FIND MY WAY OUT OF THIS BLOODY CITADEL-- IS TO STEAL A BOAT.
I MUST BE AS FOOLISH AND FRAIL AS THAT DEMON THOUGHT...
... TO BE SO TAKEN...
... BY A PRETTY FACE-- WHAT?!!
MARADA!
YOU!
I CAME AS QUICKLY AS I COULD--!
AFRAID YOU'D MISS THE KILL? NOT SO, LORD JAFFAR, YOU'RE JUST IN TIME!
MY KNIFE--?!
WILL YOU HOLD YOUR TEMPER, STARHAIR, AND LET ME EXPLAIN?!
HEAR MORE LIES, ANOTHER BETRAYAL?! WHY BOTHER?!
I MEAN YOU NO HARM!
YOU SENT YOUR HOUSEHOLD CUR TO KILL ME!

THE MABDHARA LEFT ME NO CHOICE.
AS YOU LEAVE ME NONE NOW.
HIS EYES-- I... CAN'T TURN AWAY...
MY THOUGHTS ARE YOURS, MARADA. RESISTENCE IS...
...USELESS. I WELCOME YOU... INTO MIND AND BODY... AND SOUL--
--DAMN YOU, WIZARD!
COULDN'T YOU HAVE THE DECENCY TO FACE ME WITH A SWORD?!
IT'S THE WINNING THAT MATTERS, MILADY, NOT THE WEAPONS!
BY HECATE!?! THUNDER-- SHAKING MY KEEP TO ITS FOUNDATIONS!
EXCELLENT ADVICE, MILORD. I THANK YOU FOR IT!
OHWHH!!
A QUICK TWIST WILL SNAP THE BASTARD'S NECK-- AND LEAVE ME ONE LESS FOE TO WORRY ABOUT--
--WHY CAN'T I DO IT?!
ARE HIS HOOKS SO DEEP INTO ME THAT I CAN'T BE RID OF THEM?!
I'M GLAD THAT HURT, JAFFAR.
I PRAY MY KICK MADE YOU AN EUNUCH!

THOU ART IN PAIN, MOST FAVORED SON.
IT WILL PASS, MOST HONORED LORDS.
THOU DIDST PROMISE US MARADA, JAFFAR.
WE SEE HER NOT. WE GROW IMPATIENT.
IT WAS YOUR SUMMONS WHICH WEAKENED MY GLAMOR AND ENABLED HER TO ESCAPE.
HAVE A CARE, HUMAN. WE HAVE CEDED THEE GREAT POWER, BUT THOU ART NOT OUR EQUAL.
NEVER ADDRESS US AS SUCH.
BE OUR CONFIDENCE MISPLACED, JAFFAR? A MORTAL -- NO MATTER HOW SKILLED AT FORCE OF ARMS -- SHOULD BE NO MATCH FOR A DEMON MAGE.
OR DO PLOTS EXIST WITHIN PLOTS? ART FOOL ENOUGH -- ARROGANT ENOUGH, AMBITIOUS ENOUGH -- TO TAKE THE SHE-WOLF'S PART AGAINST US?
IF YOU THINK YOU CANST DO BETTER, MY LORDS, BY ALL MEANS TRY.
WHEN YOU HAVE FAILED, IT SHALL BE MY TURN.
WOULDST CARE TO WAGER? A GIFT OF POWER UNDREAM'T OF SHOULDST THOU SUCCEED WHERE WE DO NOT.
A MOST... AMUSING PROPOSITION, LORDS. I ACCEPT.
BUT SHOULD THE REVERSE COME TO PASS, THEN JAFFAR, WHEN WE HURL MARADA'S SOUL SCREAMING INTO OUR ABYSS...
...THOU SHALT FALL BESIDE HER.

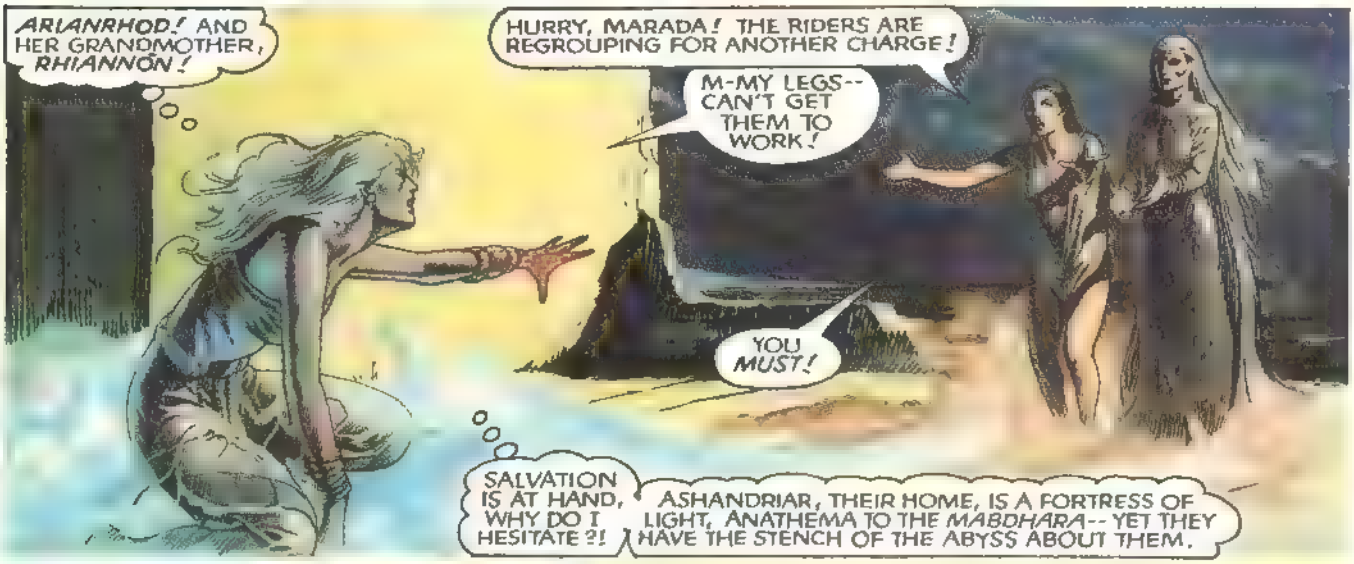
I WON'T FIND ANY HELP-- OR A PLACE TO HIDE-- IN THE CITY. THE STREETS ARE DESERTED, WITH EVERY DOOR AND WINDOW I'VE SEEN BOLTED SHUT.
THEY FEAR THE NIGHT ON *DJERIABAR*-- WITH GOOD REASON.
I'M LUCKY I FOUND THIS GUARD. I FEEL BETTER WITH A SWORD.
STRANGE-- I EXPECTED JAFFAR TO CONJURE INVISIBLE WALLS AROUND HIS CITADEL TO KEEP ME IN, OR SNATCH ME BACK WITH A SPELL OF TRANSPORTATION, BUT HE HASN'T EVEN SET HIS HOUSEHOLD TROOPS UPON MY TRAIL. PERHAPS HE AND THE *MABDHARA* HAVE DECIDED I'M NOT WORTH THE ..
EFFORT.
RUN!!!
BUT WHAT'S THE USE--
AAIIIEEEEEE!!

THE MIST-- COLDER THAN ICE!
MY BRACELETS-- THE SWORD HILT-- FREEZING TO MY SKIN! WHEN I SHIFT MY GRIP OR MOVE, I TEAR MY OWN FLESH!
SO MUCH FOR RUNNING-- I CAN BARELY STAND-- AND THIS INFERNAL MIST SHROUDS EVERY STREET. I COULD TRY FOR THE ROOF-TOPS...
...BUT IT'LL PROBABLY FOLLOW ME UP THERE.
THAT SOUND-- HOOFBEATS-- SOMEONE'S COMING!
RIDERS OF THE DAMNED!!

IN THE DARK, AND SUCH CLOSE QUARTERS...
...THE ADVANTAGE IS WITH THE WARRIOR ON THE GROUND-- PROVIDED SHE'S FAST AND AGILE ENOUGH-- HAH!
THEY CAN BE SLAIN!
SO, STARHAIR, CAN YOU!
N-NOT... DEAD?! NOT EVEN MARKED?!?
BUT THEIR SWORDS, THAT SPEAR-- I SAW... I FELT... !!
MORE GODDAMNED SORCERY!

THE WOUNDS ARE ILLUSION...
.. BUT THEIR EFFECTS ARE NOT.
I'M WEAK AS A BABE, AND FROZEN TO THE MARROW-- MY VERY BLOOD'S TURNED TO HOARFROST

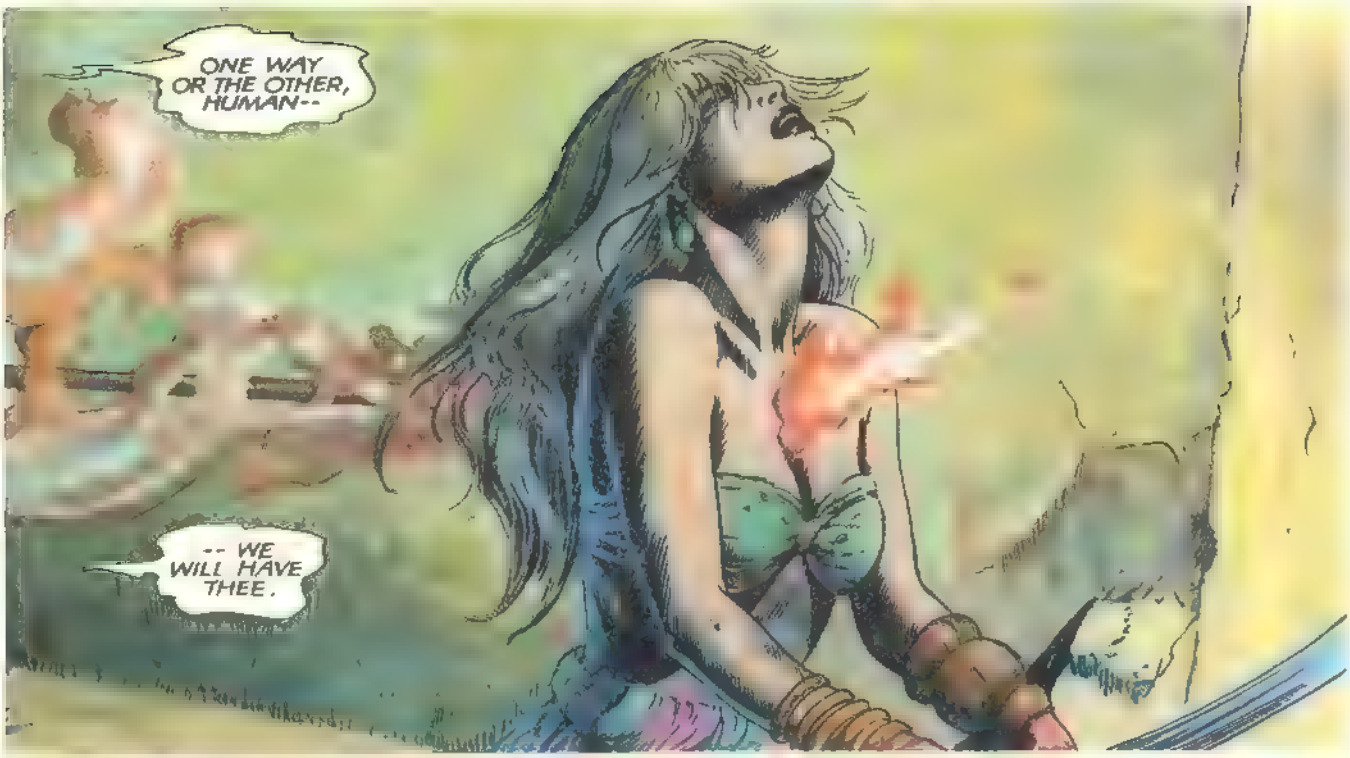
MARADA, AT LAST WE'VE FOUND YOU!
JOIN US WITHIN OUR MAGICK CIRCLE, DAUGHTER OF MY HEART, WHERE WE CAN PROTECT YOU!

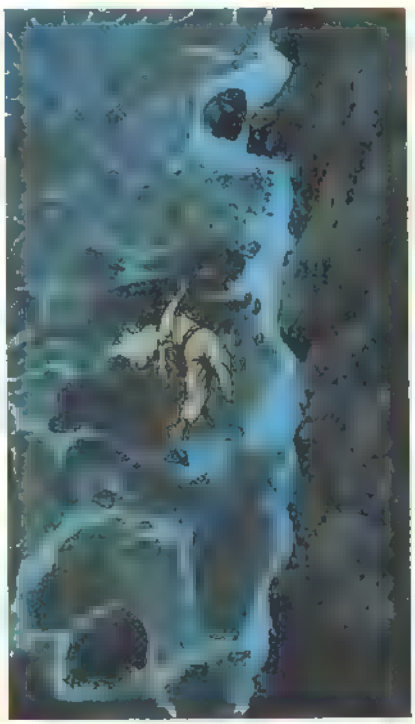

ARIANRHOD! AND HER GRANDMOTHER, RHIANNON!
HURRY, MARADA! THE RIDERS ARE REGROUPING FOR ANOTHER CHARGE!
M-MY LEGS-- CAN'T GET THEM TO WORK!
YOU MUST!
SALVATION IS AT HAND, WHY DO I HESITATE?!
ASHANDRIAR, THEIR HOME, IS A FORTRESS OF LIGHT, ANATHEMA TO THE MABDHARA-- YET THEY HAVE THE STENCH OF THE ABYSS ABOUT THEM.

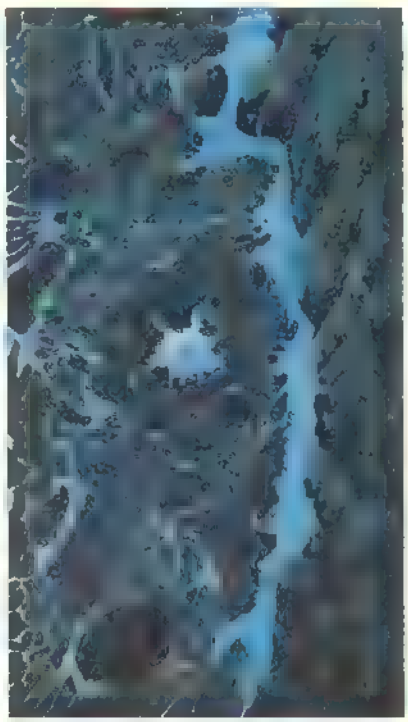
EVERYTHING ELSE I'VE ENCOUNTERED THUS FAR HAS BEEN A DECEPTION...
.. COULD THEY BE ONE AS WELL?

"THEY LOOK AND ACT PRECISELY AS I REMEMBER THEM LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS IF, IN MY MIND'S-EYE, I MAKE THE CHILD OLD...
".. AND RHIANNON YOUNG.

A TRAP--- AND IT ALMOST WORKED!
I'LL FOREVER BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE CREATURES SPAWNED OF THE ABYSS...
BUT WHEN Y'GARON RAPED ME AND BROKE MY SPIRIT, HE LEFT A PIECE OF HIS FOUL SELF WITHIN MY SOUL.
... BECAUSE I'M FOREVER *BOUND* TO IT!
THEN ACCEPT THY FATE!
Y'GARON'S SEAT AMONG THE TRIAD STANDS EMPTY-- EMBRACE OUR BELOVED DARKNESS, MARADA, AND MAYHAP THOU SHALT FILL IT!
NO!







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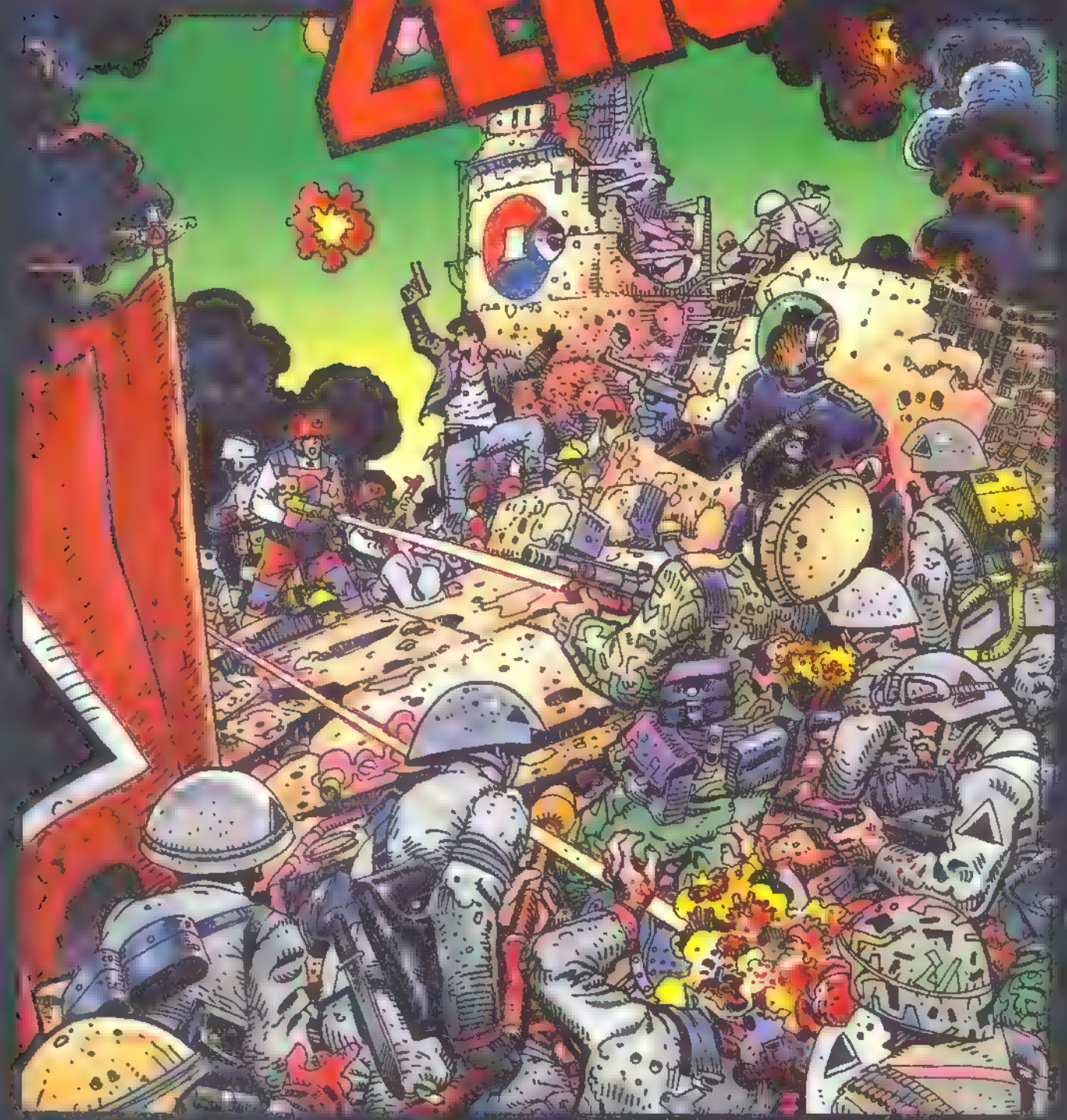
GENERATION ZERO



THE LAST BATTLE

SEAHAVEN. ONCE IT WAS PARADISE, OR THE CLOSEST THING TO IT IN A WORLD RECOVERING FROM NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST.
NO MORE
TONIGHT THIS ISLAND CITY'S BOATS RETURN FROM BURYING THEIR DEAD
TONIGHT A POPULATION THAT HAS WORKED TO AVOID VIOLENCE AND OPPRESSION STILL REELS FROM AN UGLY, NEARLY PERMANENT TASTE OF BOTH.
TONIGHT THEY GATHER WITH THE THREE YOUNG MEN WHO SAVED THEM... TO WONDER, TO WORRY, TO SEE IF THEIR SHATTERED EXISTENCE CAN STILL BE MENDED... OR EVEN PRESERVED.
WE WERE BETRAYED, FALCON! THE SECRECY OF OUR LOCATION HAS ALWAYS KEPT US FREE FROM ATTACK . UNTIL NOW. WE MUST LEARN WHO DID IT.. ! HOW...! THEN--
IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT, KUBE, DANCER AN' I HAVE BUCKED THESE GOONS FROM THE RED SEA DESERT BEFORE.
THEY WON'T QUIT BECAUSE THEY'VE BEEN TOSSED OUT ONCE. THEY'LL BE BACK--
--BADDER AN' MADDER THAN EVER! SEAHAVEN'S GOT TO BE READY. WITH ADMINISTRATOR ADEN'S PERMISSION...MAYBE THE THREE OF US CAN GET YOU THAT WAY.
THERE IS DISCUSSION... EVEN QUARRELING. BUT FINALLY... THERE IS AGREEMENT. THE ONE UNANSWERED QUESTION ...IS THERE TIME?

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FOR SOME THINGS... ALWAYS.
A MATTER LONG OVERDUE BEGINS PLAYFULLY...
LIANA...! IT'S BEEN SO--
I KNOW. I KNOW
.. AND PROCEEDS TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION.
LATER... THERE IS ANOTHER MATTER TO SETTLE.
A VIDEOTAPE? JUAN, WHAT--?
MY FATHER, LIANA. FOLLOWING HIS CLUES LED TO THE VALLEY WE TOLD YOU ABOUT ...A FANTASTIC PLACE!
BIG ENOUGH FOR YOUR UNCLE'S COLONY AND SEAHAVEN TO RELOCATE TO... AND GROW?
BIG ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE AND POP LEFT THIS TAPE THERE.
COULDN'T PLAY IT 'TIL NOW. TELL YOU THE TRUTH... I'M KINDA SCARED OF WHAT WE'LL HEAR
THE RUMORS HAVE PERSISTED. THEY HAUNT JUAN FALCÓN. THEY CLAIM HIS FATHER IS ONE WITH THE ENEMY ... PART OF THE ENSLAVING LEGION RISEN FROM THE MIDDLE-EAST.
UNEASILY, JUAN INSERTS THE CARTRIDGE. AND AS LIANA ADEN TAKES HIS HAND REASSURINGLY ...VICTOR FALCÓN SPEAKS.
IF YOU'RE VIEWING THIS, YOU'VE DONE WELL, MY SON. I'VE LEFT A TRAIL ONLY YOU COULD FOLLOW. I HOPE YOU'RE PLEASED WITH WHERE IT LED.
AS FOR ME... I'VE ALWAYS CHASED DREAMS... EVEN WHEN IT HURTS THOSE I LOVE. I'VE A NEW ONE NOW... OF LIFE BEYOND THIS WOUNDED EARTH ... IN SPACE. I DON'T ASK THAT YOU FORGIVE ME, SON... JUST TRY TO UNDERSTAND.
I DEEPLY REGRET YOUR MOTHER, YOUR BROTHER, YOUR SISTERS DID NOT SURVIVE TO BE WITH YOU.
I TRUST YOU CAN PERSUADE YOUR UNCLE RAOUL TO MOVE NORTHOLD. THAT ICY HOLE IN THE GROUND IS NO PLACE TO REBUILD MANKIND.
WITH A NOD, JUAN FALCÓN DOES BOTH.

THE TAPE WOULDN'T CONVINCE THOSE WHO TRULY **DOUBT** VICTOR FALCON. BUT JUAN IS LEFT RELIEVED, REASSURED.

THE REST OF THE NIGHT BELONGS TO HIM AND LIANA...

...THE MORNING, AND MOST WAKING HOURS THAT FOLLOW, ARE FOR SEAHAVEN'S DEFENSE.

OUR MAINTENCE BOSS, PETER. HIS CREWS ARE FULLY AT YOUR DISPOSAL.

ADAPTING WORK MACHINES INTO COMBAT VEHICLES WILL BE A ROUND-THE-CLOCK OPERATION, I FEAR.

IT IS ONLY ONE OF MANY.

THERE ARE SUPPLIES TO BE STOCKPILED AND REDISTRIBUTED...

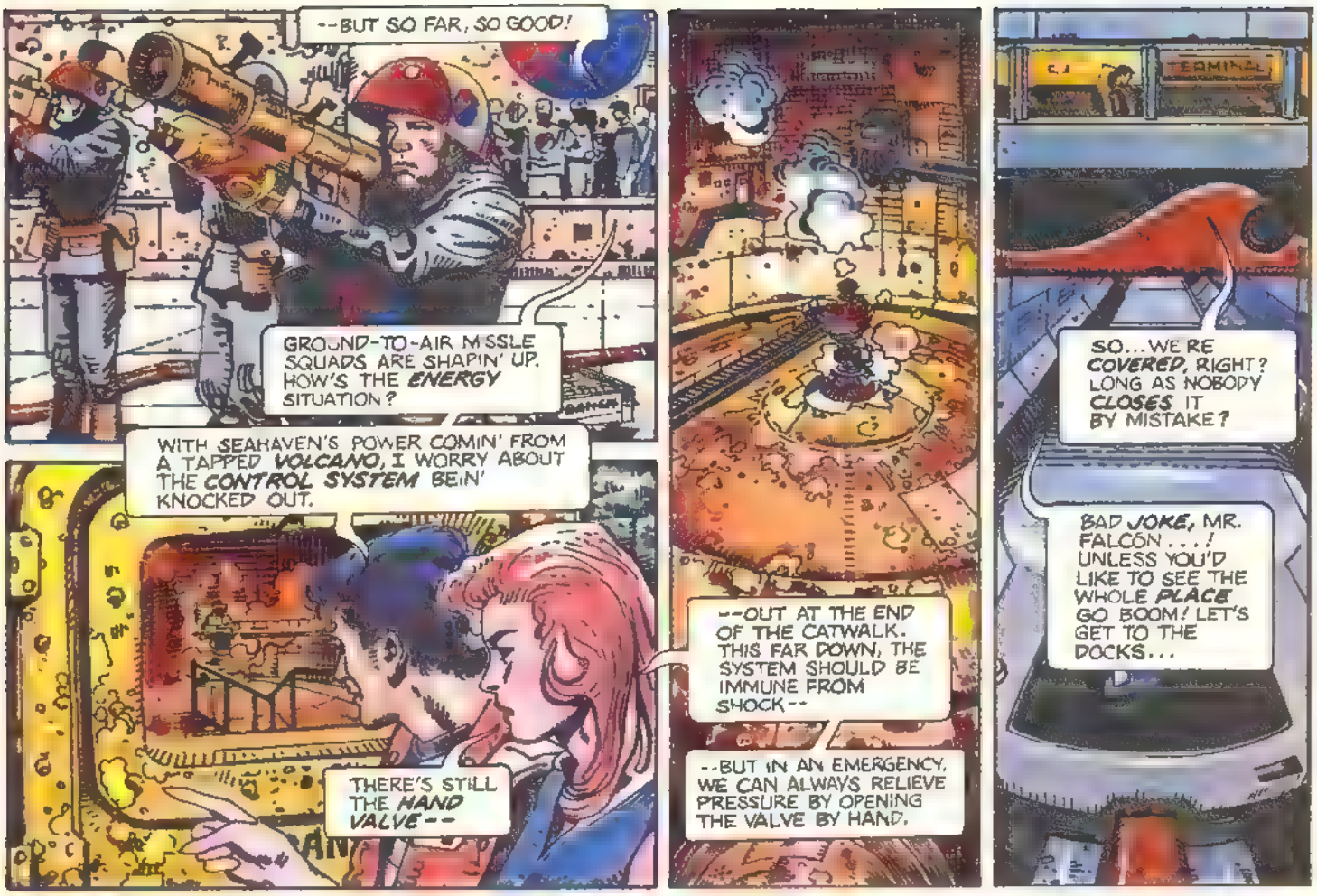
...WEAPONS TO BE CHECKED AND MODIFIED UNDER THE CRITICAL EYES OF PETER KUBESKY AND DONALD MZIMBA...

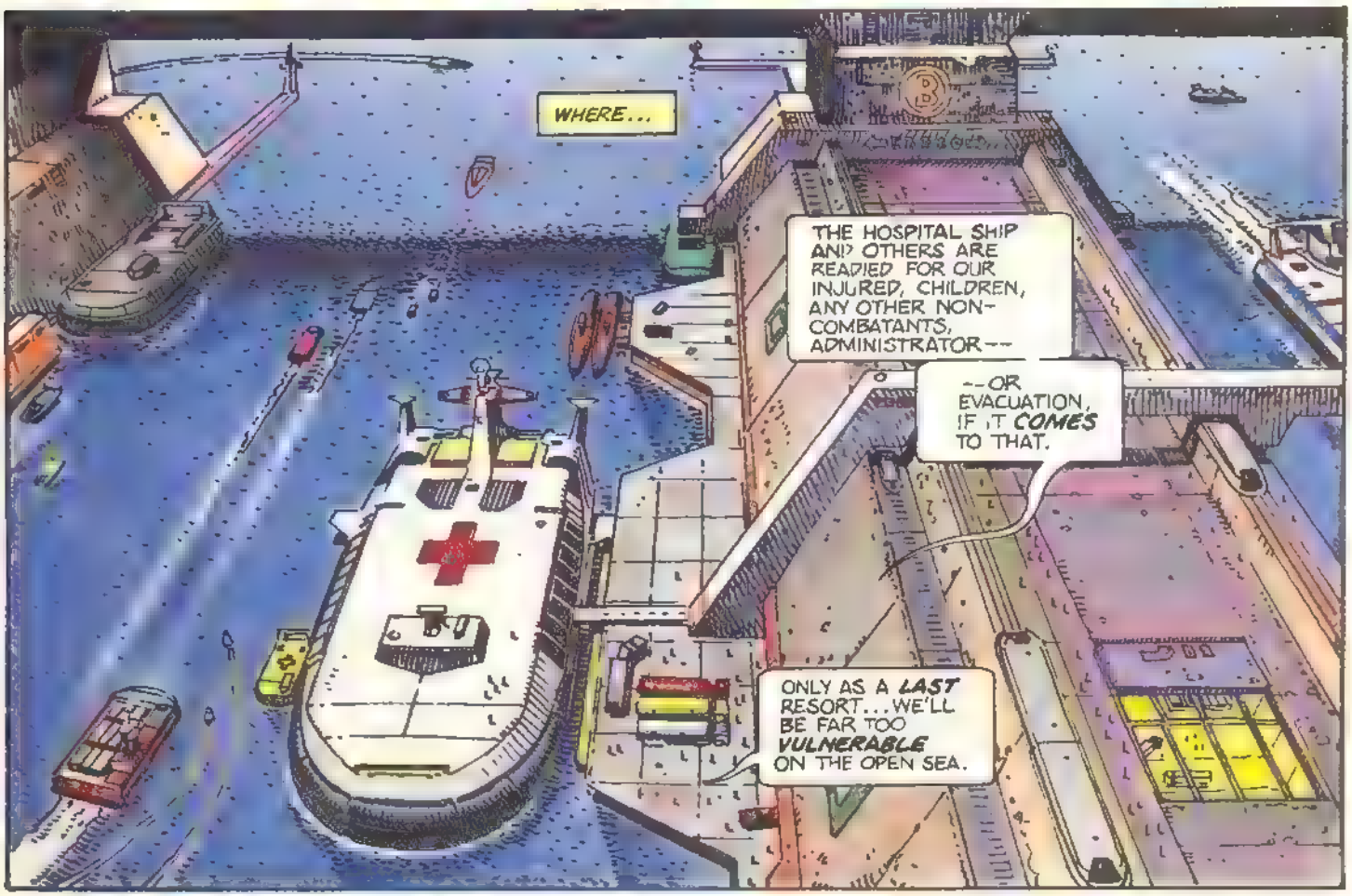
AND UNTRAINED CIVILIANS TO BE PUSHED INTO FIGHTING TRIM

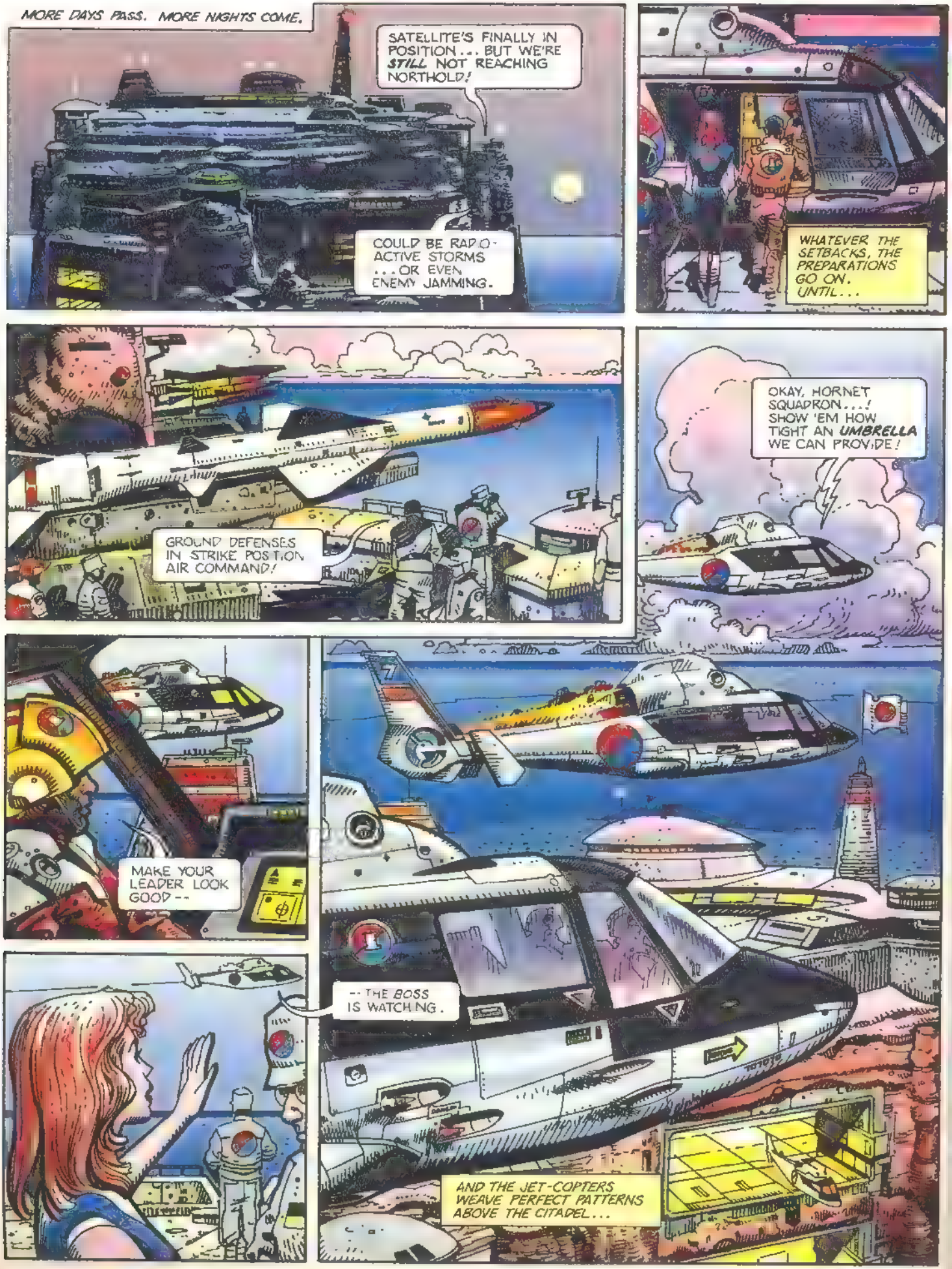
I HAD DOUBTS ABOUT TAKING OVER AFTER THE INVADERS KILLED CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR HASSIM, JUAN--

..BUT WITH ALL YOU, DANCER, AND KUBE ARE DOING, IT'S GOING PERFECTLY!

LET'S HOPE IT ***CONTINUES*** THAT WAY WHEN THE BATTLE STARTS--


--BUT SO FAR, SO GOOD!
GROUND-TO-AIR MISSLE SQUADS ARE SHAPIN' UP. HOW'S THE ENERGY SITUATION?
WITH SEAHAVEN'S POWER COMIN' FROM A TAPPED VOLCANO, I WORRY ABOUT THE CONTROL SYSTEM BEIN' KNOCKED OUT.
THERE'S STILL THE HAND VALVE--
--OUT AT THE END OF THE CATWALK. THIS FAR DOWN, THE SYSTEM SHOULD BE IMMUNE FROM SHOCK--
--BUT IN AN EMERGENCY, WE CAN ALWAYS RELIEVE PRESSURE BY OPENING THE VALVE BY HAND.
TERMINAL
SO...WE'RE COVERED, RIGHT? LONG AS NOBODY CLOSES IT BY MISTAKE?
BAD JOKE, MR. FALCON...! UNLESS YOU'D LIKE TO SEE THE WHOLE PLACE GO BOOM! LET'S GET TO THE DOCKS...


WHERE...
THE HOSPITAL SHIP AND OTHERS ARE READIED FOR OUR INJURED, CHILDREN, ANY OTHER NON-COMBATANTS, ADMINISTRATOR--
--OR EVACUATION, IF IT COMES TO THAT.
ONLY AS A LAST RESORT...WE'LL BE FAR TOO VULNERABLE ON THE OPEN SEA.

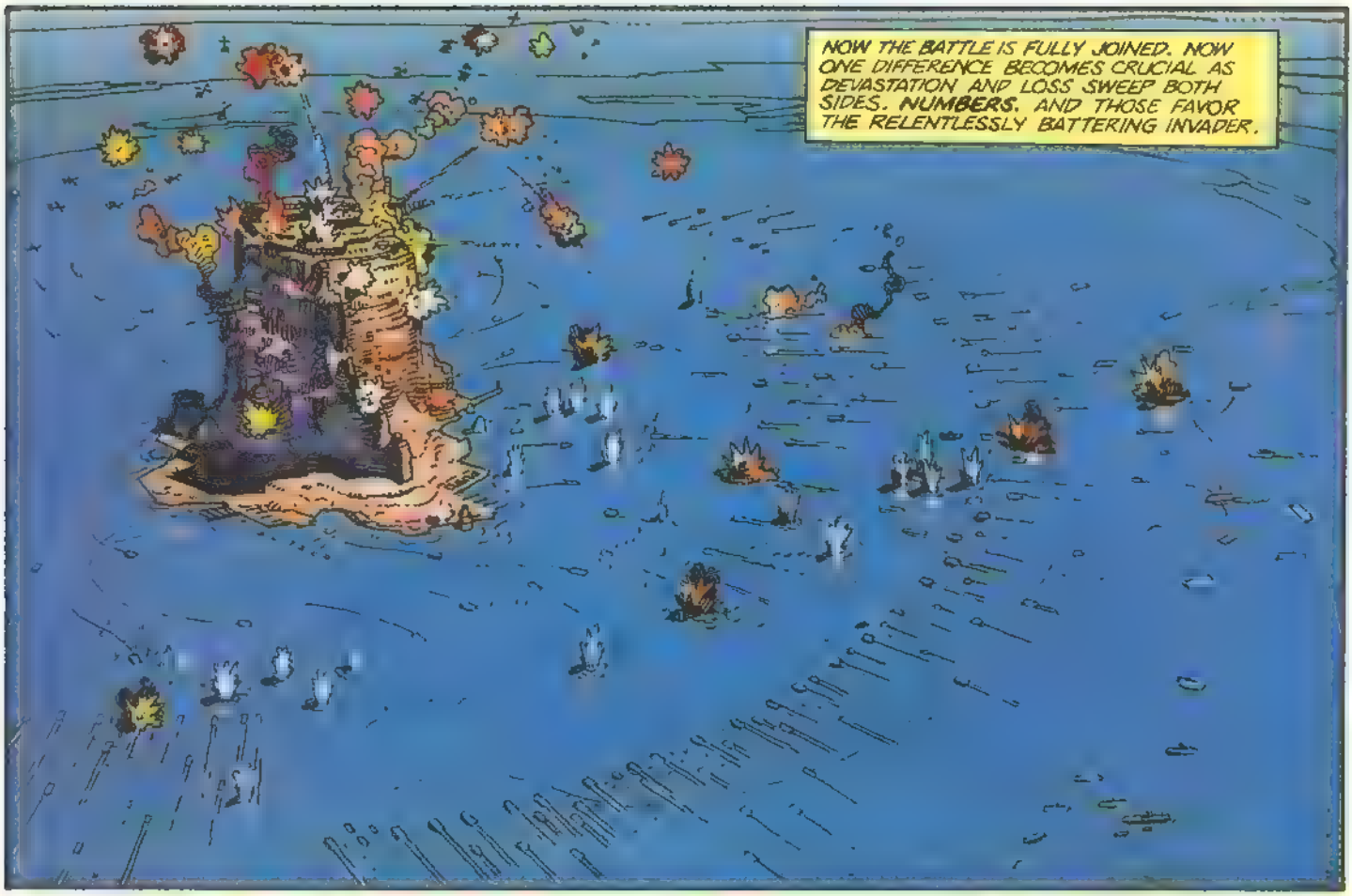

MORE DAYS PASS. MORE NIGHTS COME.
SATELLITE'S FINALLY IN POSITION... BUT WE'RE *STILL* NOT REACHING NORTHOLD!
COULD BE RADIO-ACTIVE STORMS ...OR EVEN ENEMY JAMMING.
WHATEVER THE SETBACKS, THE PREPARATIONS GO ON. UNTIL...
GROUND DEFENSES IN STRIKE POSITION AIR COMMAND!
OKAY, HORNET SQUADRON...! SHOW 'EM HOW TIGHT AN *UMBRELLA* WE CAN PROVIDE!
MAKE YOUR LEADER LOOK GOOD--
--THE *BOSS* IS WATCHING.
AND THE JET-COPTERS WEAVE PERFECT PATTERNS ABOVE THE CITADEL...

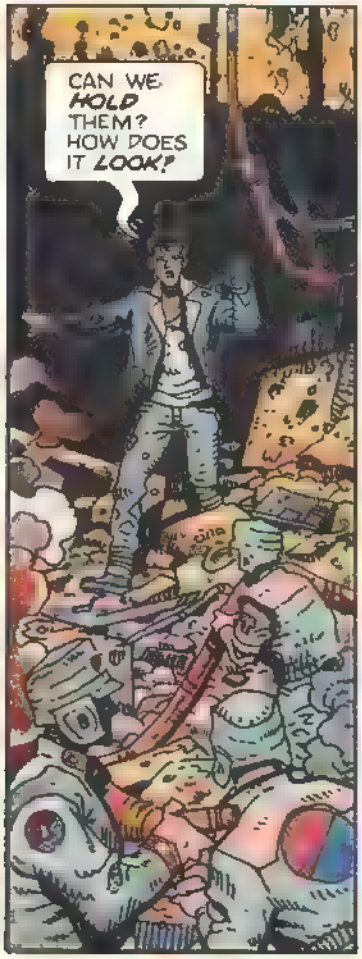
...UNTIL RECALLED TO BASE.
PUT 'EM AWAY CAREFULLY, HORNETS--
--NEXT TIME WE TAKE 'EM OUT MAY NOT BE A RUN-THROUGH!
WEIRD...! BETWEEN US, DANCER, KUBE AN' ME MUST'VE DESERTED FIVE OR SIX ARMIES AFTER THE BIG BLOW UP. NOW HERE WE ARE LEADIN' ONE!
AIR CHIEF FALCON...? THE REST OF THE GENERAL STAFF IS WAITING ON DECK.
CHOPPERS LOOKED REAL GOOD UP THERE, JOHNNY. WE JUST MIGHT PULL THIS OFF.
ROUGH WITHOUT ANY REAL INTELLIGENCE ON THE ENEMY DANCER BUT.. I'D SAY WE'RE READY AS WE'LL EVER BE. AGREED, KUBE?
MY MAIN STRATEGY CALLS FOR BOLSTERING HERE AND THERE, MY FRIENDS OTHERWISE--
"--IT IS ALL UP TO OUR AGGRESSIVE ACQUAINTANCES FROM THE DESERT."
THEY DO NOT COME.
THE MEETINGS, THE TRAINING RESUME...

..AND STILL, THEY DO NOT COME
S .T SOME SORT OF TRICK?
TAKES T ME TO MOUNT AN INVASION TOO. CAN T LET THE WA T NG GET TO YOU BEST APPROACH--
NEARLY DAYLIGHT. I'M GONNA SEE OUR DAWN RECON FLIGHT OFF.. THEN RUSH BACK HERE
I'LL BRING SOMETHING BACK. DON'T HAVE FLIGHT DUTY 'TIL THIS AFTERNOON, SO WE CAN--
- S TO TURN IT TO TO YOUR ADVANTAGE."
LIANA ..?
SHALL I COME W.TH YOU? WE COULD HAVE BREAKFAST AND -
KABOOOMM
OH JESUS.../ IT'S STARTED! LIANA! LIANA ARE YOU--

SHE IS STILL BREATHING. HE SCREAMS FOR THE MEDICS AS HE CLAWS THROUGH THE RUBBLE TO HER SIDE.
LIANA...!
YOU'RE...CRYING? I MUST LOOK AWFUL...ALL THIS D-DUST COVERING ME...
LEAVE ME...PLEASE. YOU CAN'T HELP HERE...BUT YOU CAN OUTSIDE. PLEASE, JUAN...
OKAY, BUT I'LL BE BACK. SOONER THAN YOU THINK.
DAMN! DAMN IT TO HELL! I KNEW IT'D BE BAD, BUT--
OH, MY GOD!

IN SEAHAVEN'S COMMAND BUNKER, PETER KUBESKY SHOUTS TO BREAK THE NEARLY PARALYZING SILENCE THE SIGHT IMPARTS.
GO DIRECTLY TO OUR STAGE TWO DEFENSE, MY FRIENDS--!
WUM!
KWOM
"INTERCEPTOR BOATS OUT--
"--HORNET SQUADRONS ALOFT!
"LET THE ENEMY SEE HE HASN'T CAUGHT US AS AS UNPREPARED AS HE MIGHT THINK!"
THEY HAVE NO LONG-RANGE GUNS TO MATCH OURS...BUT THEY ARE RALLYING REMARKABLY WELL, SIR!
I'D BE DISAPPOINTED IF THEY DIDN'T. CONTINUE SHELLING--
--AND PRESS IN WITH OUR ASSAULT BARGES. EVERYTHING IS PROCEEDING ACCORDING TO PLAN.


NOW THE BATTLE IS FULLY JOINED. NOW ONE DIFFERENCE BECOMES CRUCIAL AS DEVASTATION AND LOSS SWEEP BOTH SIDES. NUMBERS. AND THOSE FAVOR THE RELENTLESSLY BATTERING INVADER.



NO! I'M NOT GOIN' TO LET THAT HAPPEN! NOT AFTER ALL THEY'VE DONE! TO LIANA... TO US ALL!
THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY!
EVEN IF IT MEANS FINDING THAT FLASHY-HELMETED SON OF A BITCH WHO LEADS THEM --

NEXT ISSUE: THE *CONCLUSION* OF *GENERATION ZERO*

VENTRILOQUIST

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HO, INNKEEPER, IS THIS A PLACE WHERE A TIRED TRAVELLER CAN FIND A BED?
MORE THAN THAT, STRANGER. BESIDES SOFT BED AND EXCELLENT FOOD I OFFER YOU THE BEST ENTERTAINMENT SHOW IN THIS WRETCHED TOWN. COME IN!
MY DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS, LET ME PRESENT YOU OUR TWO STARS OF TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCE...
MAESTRO LUCAS AND HIS TALKING DOLL FRYDOLIN!
I HOPE HIS WINE IS BETTER THAN HIS "STARS"...
WILL YOU BE SO KIND AS TO GREET OUR AUDIENCE, FRYDOLIN?
OH, SHUT UP, OLD BUZZARD!
EVERYBODY FREEZE!
AHAHAH
HA HA HA
HE HE HA HO HO HO

IT'S THE GREAT BODYMASTER HIMSELF!
I'VE WARNED YOU, LUCAS, THAT FOOLING AROUND WITH DOLLS WAS THE "BLACK MAGIC"! ARREST HIM!
BUT YOUR EXCELLENCY, FRYDOLIN IS NOT...
WE'LL SEE THAT...
NO! PLEASE DON'T!
STAY BACK! YOU'LL GET YOUR SHARE PRETTY SOON!
YOU CAN SPOIL MY ENTERTAINMENT, BUT...
YOU CAN'T SPILL MY WINE!

KILL HIM!
MY DOLL!
RUN FOR YOUR LIFE, OLD MAN!
PLEASE SAVE MY DOLL!
I HAVE IT!
DON'T LET THEM GET AWAY!
DAMN YOU, OLD MAN! DON'T ACT LIKE A FOOL! WE CAN'T MAKE IT ON FOOT!

YAAAH!
YOUR HAND, MAN! QUICK!
USE YOUR BOW, YOU DOG!
OH, GREAT MASTER OF SHADOWS, LEAD MY SHAFT, OR THIS LUNATIC WILL CHOP OFF MY HEAD...
GET THEM! GET THEM! GET THEM!
HANG ON! IF WE PASS THROUGH THE CITY GATE THEY WON'T FOLLOW US INTO THE DESERT.

WE MADE IT!
HEY, WHAT'S WRONG, OLD CHAP?
THE ARROW! THEY'VE GOTTEN HIM!
DON'T TELL ME THAT AFTER ALL THIS TROUBLE YOU'LL... OH, NO! HE IS DEAD!
LET ME SEE WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH HIM!
?=?
GODS! STAY AWAY FROM ME, YOU DIABOLIC CREATURE!
HEY, COOL IT, MAN. THIS IS ONLY A DISGUISE!
TELL ME, WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE A BRILLIANT CONSTRUCTOR LIKE ME, WHO HAPPENED TO BE A DWARF, TOO, IN A CITY WHERE ALMOST EVERY SOPHISTICATED CRAFT HAD BEEN DECLARED A WITCHCRAFT AFTER THAT STUPID RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION TWENTY YEARS AGO? WELL...
...I DID MY BEST!

THE SACRED & THE PROFANE

OUR SITUATION HAS BECOME MORE EXTRAORDINARY THAN I COULD HAVE EVER .MAGINED POSSIBLE I AM AFRAID WE ARE BEING COMPELLED TO CONFRONT FORCES MANKIND WAS NEVER MEANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE DEEP AND DELICATE TRUTH SEEMS TO EVADE US NOW MORE THAN EVER

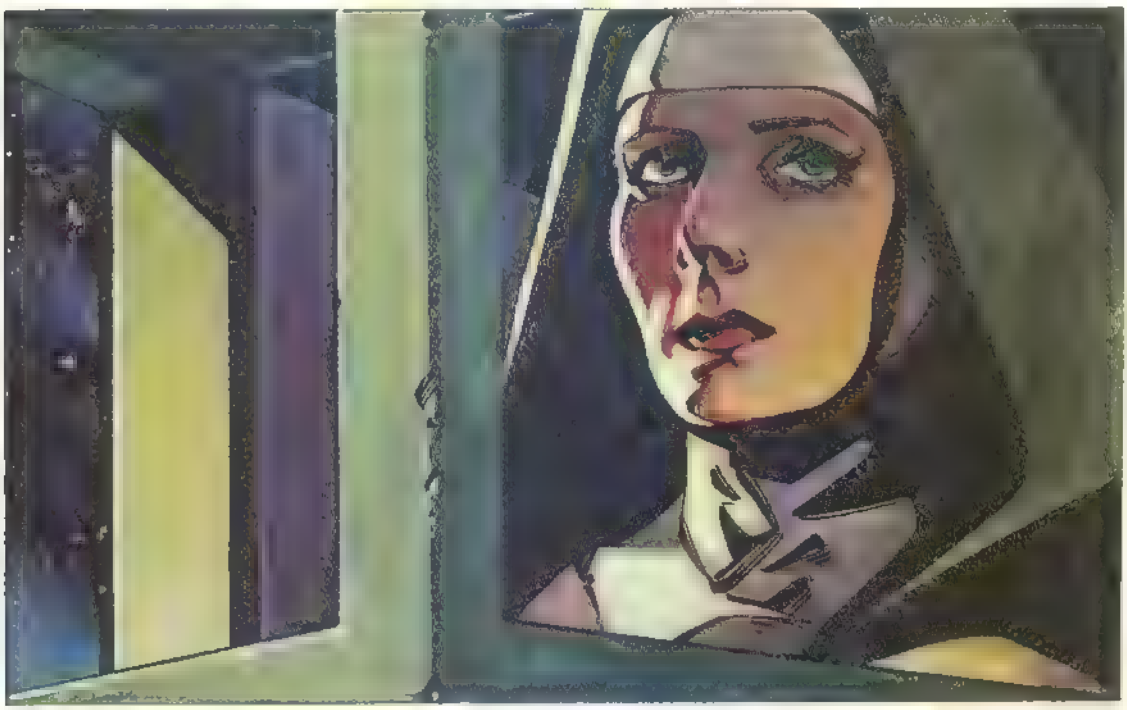
§ SAINT CATHERINES HAS SUSTAINED SUCH AWFUL DAMAGE AND DISMEMBERMENT I DEPLORE MY EARLIER ANXIETY NOW AS IRREVERENT AS WELL AS DANGEROUS MY ACTIONS COULD HAVE BEEN SO MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE HAD I ONLY TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF MY OWN STRENGTH MY FAITH IS NO WEAKER THAN IOSHUA'S OR BISHOP BROCK'S I COULD HAVE SERVED THE MOTHER CHURCH MORE USEFULLY HAD I NOT FALLEN VICTIM TO THE SAVAGE MONOTONY OF OUR JOURNEY.

§ WE MUST NOW ADDRESS THE QUESTIONS OF SURVIVAL AND FEAR HAD I EVER DOUBTED MY VOWS I NEVER DOUBTED MY HUMANITY I HAVE ONLY COME TO REALIZE THAT THESE THINGS ARE SOMEHOW SYNONYMOUS, AND CALL FOR A MORE APPROPRIATE STYLE OF COMMITMENT

§ THE DISASTER IN THE CHAPEL HAS LEFT ME FEARFULLY ALERT I THANK OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THAT MY PRESENCE OF MIND DID NOT DESERT ME IN THE RESULTING CHAOS I WAS FORTUNATE BISHOP BROCK WAS NOT HIS INIURIES ARE CRIT.CAL I OFFER MY EVERY PRAYER FOR HIM THE REVEREND MOTHER THOUGH BADLY HURT WILL ENDURE SHE IS INDEED A STRONG WOMAN THE ACOLYTE DAVID AND MYSELF SUFFERED ONLY THE SLIGHTEST OF INIURIES

§ WE DO SO WISH TO BE AS STRONG AS THE UNIVERSE YET I WONDER IF PERHAPS WE DONT ACTUALLY WISH THE UNIVERSE AS WEAK AS OURSELVES

S Marianna



c MCMLXXXIII

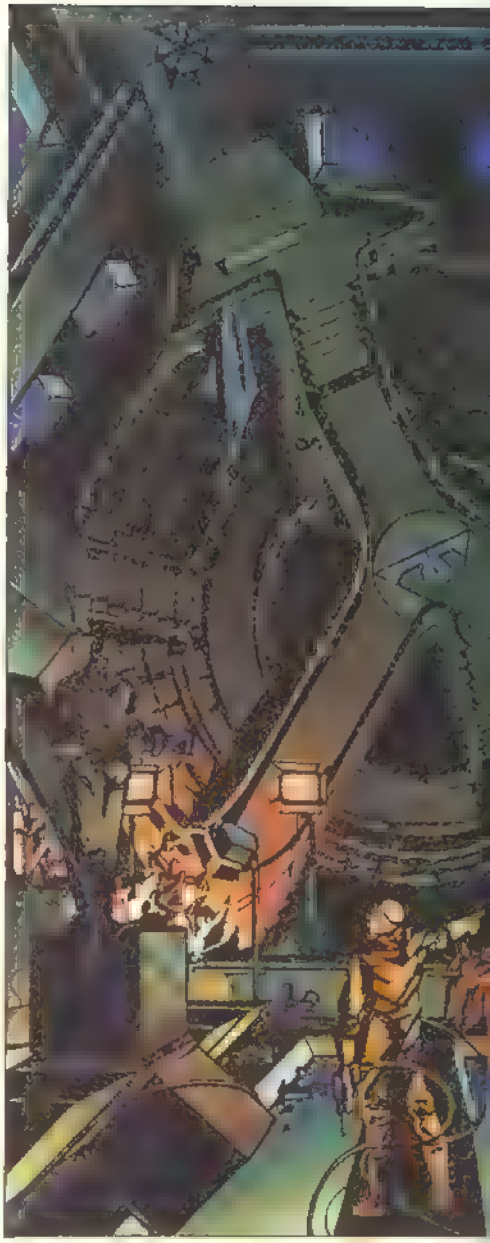
By Dean Motter and Ken Steacy

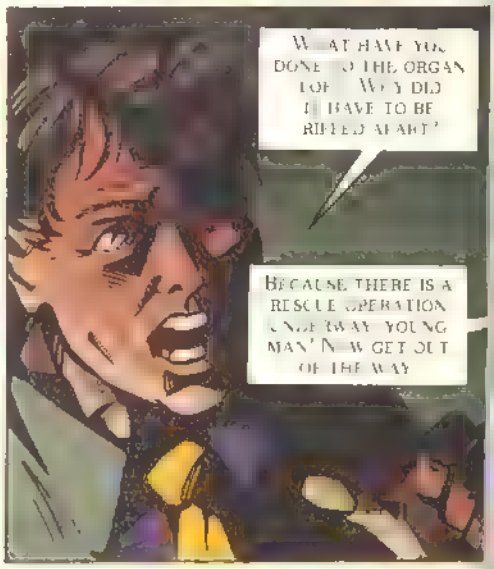
Plague Fugi
YES, DAVID WHAT IS IT?
I'M SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, YOUR EMINENCE
NOT AT ALL COME IN MY SON
MAYBE I SHOULD COME BACK LATER SIR
EACH OF US IS FRIGHTENED DAVID DO NOT BE ASHAMED
I'M NOT ASHAMED OF BEING AFRAID ONLY WEAK
THE STRONG CANNOT BE BRAVE, SON ONLY THE WEAK CAN BE BRAVE AND ONLY THE BRAVE CAN BE TESTED IN TIME OF DOUBT TO BE STRONG
THAT KIND OF COURAGE IS ONLY AVAILABLE TO US THROUGH PRAYER WILL YOU PRAY WITH ME, DAVID?
YES SIR
THE LORD BE WITH YOU
THANK YOU YOUR EMINENCE

CARDINAL!
DAVID!

DELTA PYLON IS COLLAPSING! STRESS FROM STRUCTURAL DAMAGE IS CAUSING
THE CARDINAL'S SANCTUM IS IN DELTA WE MUST GET HIM OUT OF THERE!
VICTOR, THE POWER MAINS RUN THROUGH DELTA PYLON!
THE GRAVITY

EVERYONE STAY CALM! ALEX HOW DOES THAT STATUS PROGRAM LOOK?
UH WELL DAMAGE CRITICAL MAGNITUDE - POSITIONS I DON'T KNOW IT'S OFF THE SCALE GRAVITY SYNTHESIS COMPLETELY BLOWN WE SEEM TO BE UNDER THE OBJECT'S GRAVITATIONAL INFLUENCE NOW!
WE HAVE A NINETY PERCENT POWER LOSS LIFE SUPPORT LIGHTING AND MONITOR SYSTEMS HAVE SWITCHED OVER TO EMERGENCY PROGRAMS
WHAT ABOUT DELTA?
BAD SIR BUT THE CARDINAL'S CHAMBERS SEEM TO BE INTACT THANK GOD
GET ME HIS LINE
I CAN'T! ALL COMMUNICATION AND POWER LINES IN DELTA ARE INOPERATIVE
I AM GOING TO CHECK ON HIS SITUATION IN THE MEANTIME EVACUATE AND SHUT DOWN ALL NON-ESSENTIAL AREAS, AND STAND BY!
I'LL ACCOMPANY YOU, YOUR HOLINESS
TERRIFIC!




WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO THE ORGAN LOFT? WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE RIPPED APART?
BECAUSE THERE IS A RESCUE OPERATION UNDERWAY, YOUNG MAN! NOW GET OUT OF THE WAY!

IF WE CUT THROUGH THE SECONDARY DELTA BUTTRESS WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE CARDINAL'S SANCTUM
THAT'S GOING TO USE UP A LOT OF RESERVE POWER, YOUR HOLINESS
THAT CAN'T BE HELPED. DIVERT ALL AVAILABLE POWER TO THE SANCTUARY
I DON'T UNDERSTAND, JOHN. THEY HAD TO MOVE THE ORGANS IN ORDER TO BEGIN THE EXCAVATION.
OF COURSE I UNDERSTAND.
IT'S SO VAGUE. WHAT WE CAN

AND I TELL YOU WE ARE WASTING TIME THESE MEN SHOULD BE AT WORK ON THE HANGAR DECK SO THAT WE CAN STRIKE BACK
NOT WHILE THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE CARDINAL IS ALIVE WE ARE GOING TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO GET TO HIM
NO ONE COULD SURVIVE THAT
NOW YOU LISTEN TO ME I HOLD YOU PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS CRISIS YOUR EFFORTS HAVE BEEN DECIDEDLY DESTRUCTIVE YOU ARE WORSE THAN USELESS JOSHUA YOU ARE A MENACE
YOU FOOLISH FOOL
I WILL NOT STAND FOR YOUR INSOLENCE – OR INTERFERENCE ANY LONGER NOW, GET OUT OF MY SIGHT!
COWARD

JOAN. WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING? I BELIEVE YOU OWE ME SOMETHING
GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME
LISTEN, YOU SLUT! I SAW YOU WITH THAT TECHNICIAN THIS AFTERNOON
I'M GOING TO THE CLINIC TO SEE MY UNCLE. SISTER ELAINE SAYS HE'S IN CRITICAL CONDITION. HE NEEDS SOMEONE. HE NEEDS ME
ISN'T IT A LITTLE LATE FOR SUCH FAMILIAL CONCERN?
WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO OPEN YOUR EYES, JOSHUA? CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE

THEY HAVE BEEN EXCAVATING FOR AN AWFULLY LONG TIME
PERHAPS I SHOULD SEE IF THE ARCH BISHOP NEEDS ASSISTANCE
WILL BE BACK IN AN HOUR JOHN
JOHN ?

WHY... WHY DID YOU DO THAT? YOU HAD NO RIGHT TO INTERFERE
YOU SILLY LITTLE MAN! I HAVE JUST SAVED YOUR LIFE!
LOOK AT WHAT THAT THING DID TO YOUR FRIEND!

You imbecile We must establish communication with these creatures Is that so difficult to understand
All you've done is render John's death meaningless Damn you
Communication
Has everyone gone mad?
Eric wait! Listen to me
No
Please I understand but you've got to get a grip on yourself
Spare me Miss Brock – just spare me!
I really do understand

THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE continues next issue

THE ADVENTURES OF CHEECH WIZARD

BY VAUGHN BODÉ

INKED & COLORED BY MARK BODÉ

CHEECH WIZARD IS THE GREATEST SMARTEST WIZARD WHO EVER LIVED. HE CAN DO ANYTHING BETTER THAN ANYBODY. I NOT KIDDING, I'M HIS ONLY ASSISTANT, RAZBERRY..
HERE COMES CHEECH WIZARD UP THE ROAD..

CHEECH WIZARD, SIR, YOU IS THE GREATEST WIZARD WHO EVER LIVED AND I IS PROUD TO BE YOUR ASSISTANT...
SHUTUP, YOU STRINGY STUMPY LITTLE HALF CRAZED SWAMP LIZARD. I IS MEDITATIN' ON HOW TO PRINT MONEY...

GEE CHEECH, YOU'RE SURE AWFUL SMART ALL THE TIME, AND I LIKE TO TELL OUR READERS THAT TOO...
WE DON'T SPOSE TO ADDRESS DA READERS YOU PIMPLE. NOW PAY ATTENTION TO YOU LINES OR WE NEVER GONNA MOVE DIS COMIC TRAGEDY...

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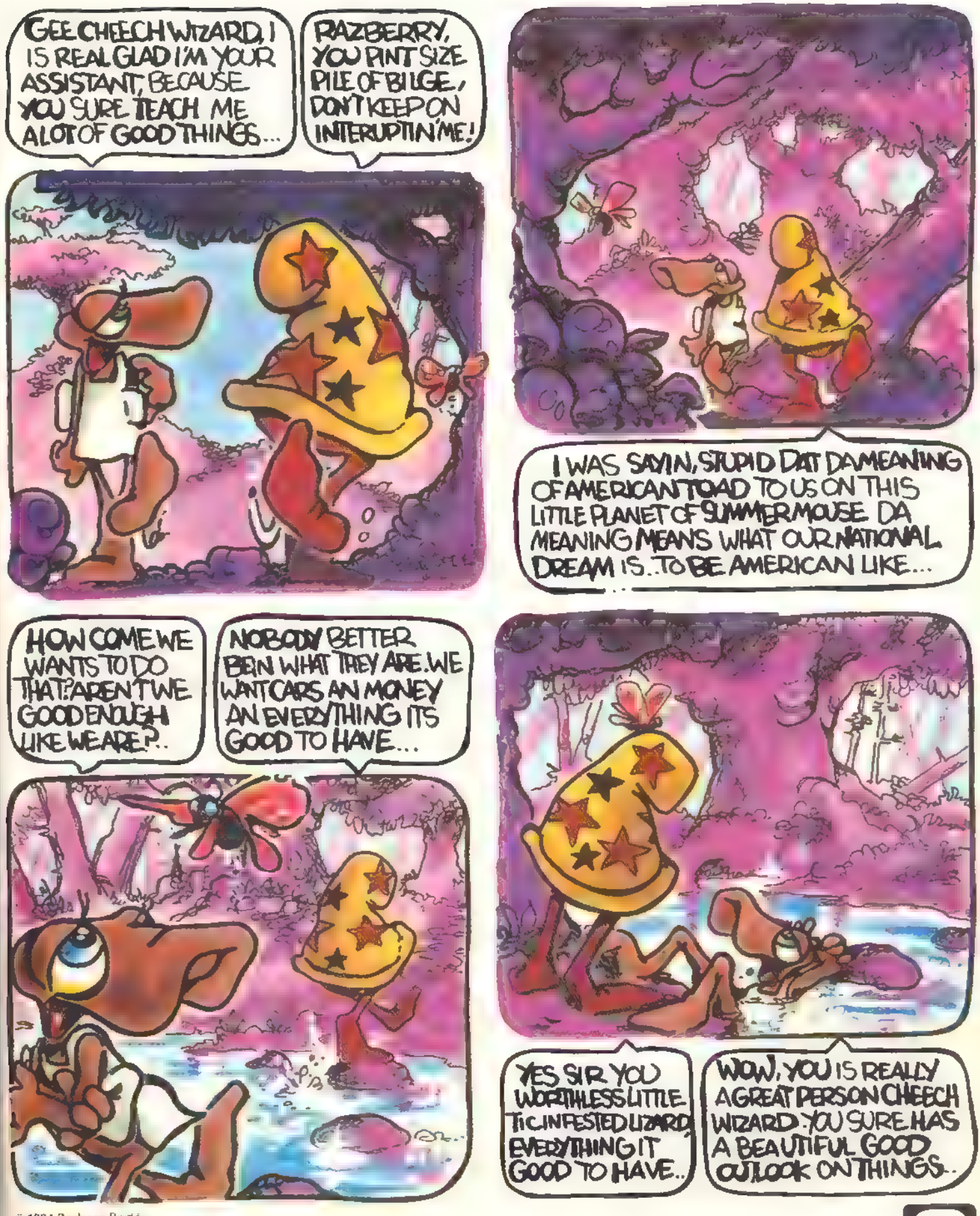
...AHH... LETS SEE. OH YES, SAY, CHEECH WIZARD, WOULD YOU DO A MAGIC TRICK FORME? WOULD YOU MAKE YOUR SELF DISAPPEAR A MINUTE?...
OKAY, RAZBERRY, I'LL DOES ONE MINUTES WORTH OF BEING DISAPPEARED BUT YOU GOTTA BLOCK YOU BLOOD SHOT LITTLE EYES...
JUMP
ALRIGHT TIC MOUTH, OPEN YOU BEEDY EYES, I IS DISAPPEARED COMPLETELY....
WOW!
WHY, DIS IS SUPER FANTASTIC SIR, YOU IS REALLY REALLY GONE! I CAN'T BELIEVE MY BOGGLED SENSES YOU IS GREAT!!
BLOCK UP YOU NAIVE ORBS, RAZBERRY, AN I'LL HOP BACK INTO DA PICTURE...
FLUMP!
MAN, YOU IS SURE A GIGANTIC PERSON CHEECH WIZARD!..
LISTEN, DRIBBLE MIND, IF YOU BURNS MY HAMBURGER AGAIN TODAY I'LL KILL YOU...


GEE CHEECH WIZARD, I IS REAL GLAD I'M YOUR ASSISTANT, BECAUSE YOU SURE TEACH ME ALOT OF GOOD THINGS...
RAZBERRY, YOU PINT SIZE PILE OF BILGE, DON'T KEEP ON INTERUPTIN'ME!
I WAS SAYIN, STUPID DAT DAMEANING OF AMERICAN TOAD TO US ON THIS LITTLE PLANET OF SUMMER MOUSE DA MEANING MEANS WHAT OUR NATIONAL DREAM IS..TO BE AMERICAN LIKE...
HOW COME WE WANTS TO DO THAT? AREN'T WE GOOD ENOUGH LIKE WE ARE?..
NOBODY BETTER BEIN WHAT THEY ARE. WE WANT CARS AN MONEY AN EVERYTHING ITS GOOD TO HAVE...
YES SIR YOU WORTHLESS LITTLE TIC INFESTED LIZARD, EVERYTHING IT GOOD TO HAVE..
WOW, YOU IS REALLY A GREAT PERSON CHEECH WIZARD. YOU SURE HAS A BEAUTIFUL GOOD OUTLOOK ON THINGS..

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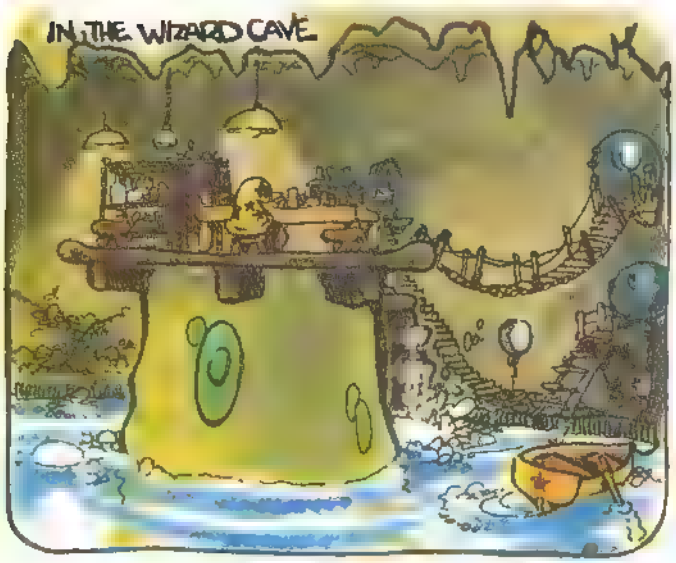
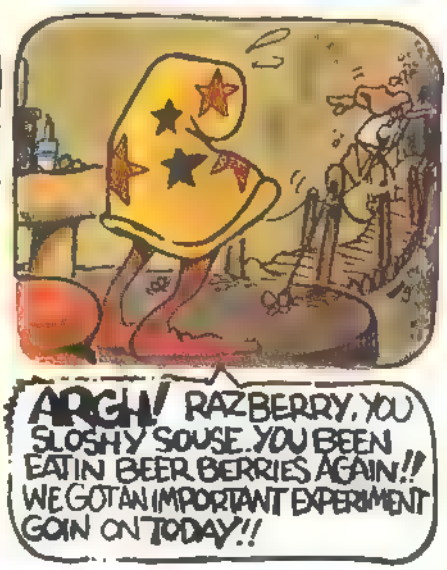
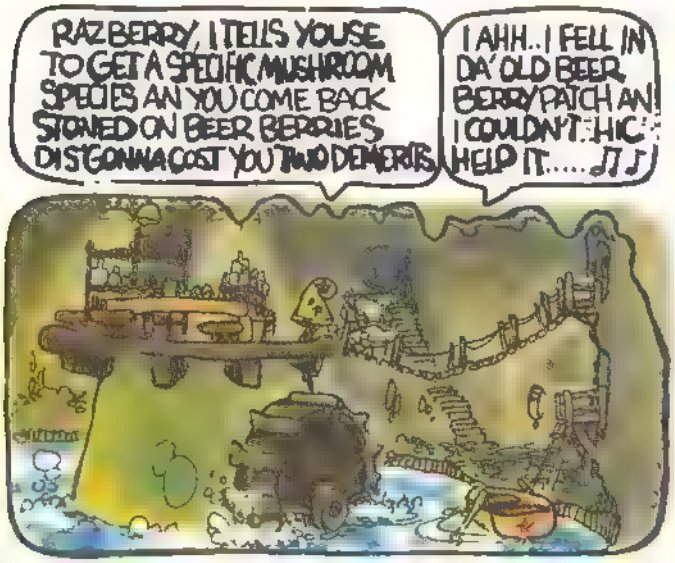
THE ADVENTURES OF CHEECH WIZARD

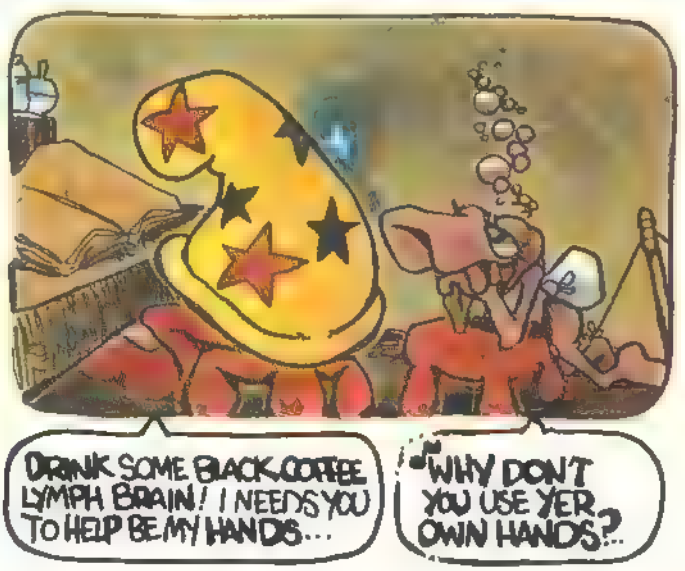
BY VAUGHN BODE

INKED & COLORED BY MARK BODE






RAZBERRY, I TELLS YOUSE TO GET A SPECIFIC MUSHROOM SPECIES AN YOU COME BACK STONED ON BEER BERRIES, DIS GONNA COST YOU TWO DEMERITS
I AHH.. I FELL IN DA' OLD BEER BERRY PATCH AN! I COULDN'T HIC HELP IT..... ♫♪



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RAZBERRY YOU DARES TURN ON CHEECH WIZARD!?
NO CHEECH SIR, IT WAS JUST A JOKE, I DIDN'T KNOWS WHAT I SAID, I LOST MY MIND!
YOU KNOWS I DON'T GOT NO OFFICIAL HANDS YOU LITTLE LILY-PAD STOMPIN' DUMBELL!!
ALRIGHT.. I IS A BENEFICENT AN GREAT WIZARD, I LET THIS OUTBURST OF REBELLION GO DIS TIME.. BUT.. YOU DOES IT AGAIN AN I'LL CAST MY CARDIAC ARREST SPELL ON YOUSE.
TODAY, WORM, WE IS USEIN' NITRO-MUSH, A DEADLY HIGH PROTEIN UNSTABLE EXPLOSIVE. NOW, PUT ONE GRAM CAREFULLY ONTO DA LAB PLATE...
HICCUP!
KUNCH
RAZBERRY?...
GET MY CARDIAC ARREST BOOK DOWN FROM DA SHELF PLEASE..

ONCE UPON A TIME AT 2:30 IN THE AFTERNOON ON THE EVER SO TINY PLANET OF SUMMERMOUSE (WHICH ORBITS IN A PLANE PERPENDICULAR TO THE REST OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM IN BETWEEN EARTH AND VENUS) THERE LIVES A WIZARD WHO WEARS A BIG HAT TO PROTECT HIM FROM THE RAIN, SUN, DUST, HEAT, COLD, MILDEW, OTHER HATS AND HIS COMPLICATED AND DEMANDING SOCIETY... THIS BIG, AHH, HAT GOES BY THE HANDLE OF

CHEECH WIZARD

NOW. .LESSSEE HERE TWO MILLS OF SLOWDIAN FARMACIDE. NO. DATS AHH. MAYBE SIX MILLS CAUSE MY SLOWDIAN FARMA'CIDE IS GETTIN A LITTLE YELLOW WIF'AGE..
BY VAUGHN BODE
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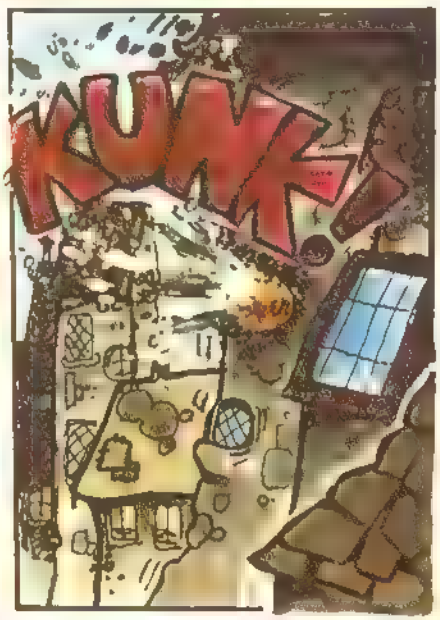
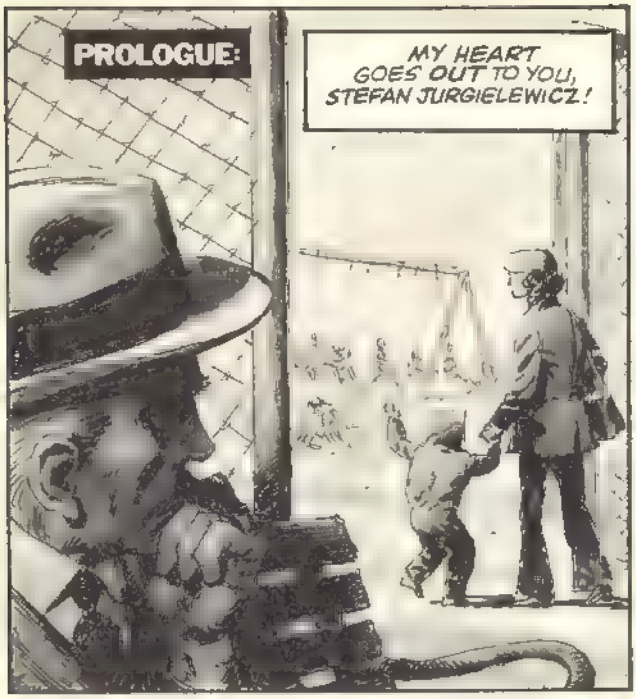
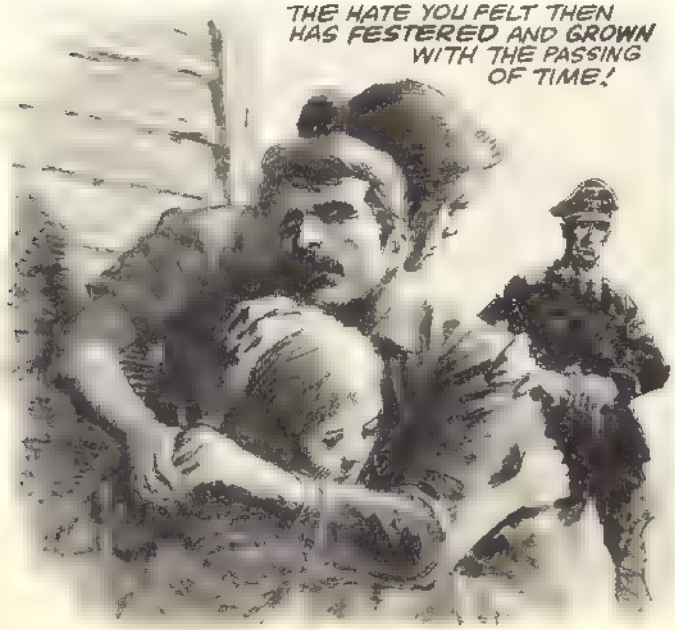
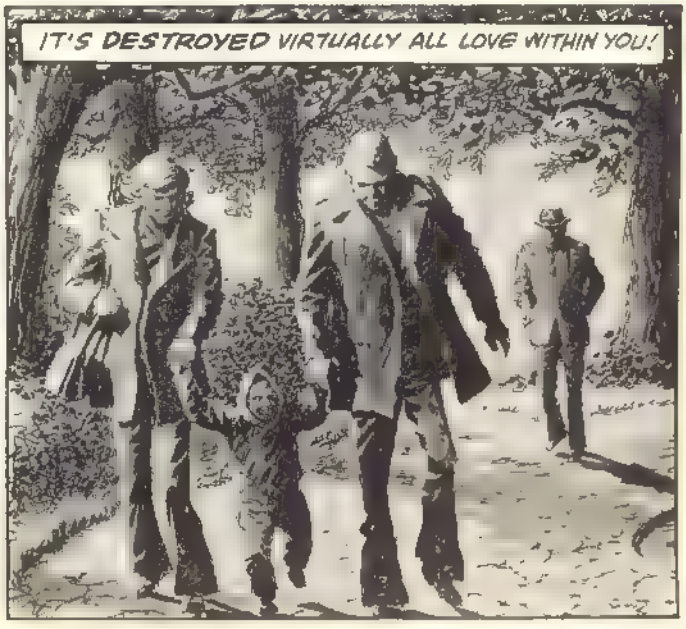


WHATZAT!
RELAX PITTSBURG JUS SIT DOWN. IT DAT DUMB REPULSIVE HAT AGAIN', CHEECH STILL PRETENDIN' HE CAN CUT DA WIZARD MUSTARD...
AWW, YEAH KANSAS CITY BA, BUT CHEECH WIZARD HE GOT A BS AN STUFF ON HIS WALL...
UMM. SHOO' AN HE ALSO FULL OF BS AN STUFF UP TO DA TOP OF HIS GAUDY FLOPPY HAT YECK.. HEY VAN EYKE GIVE US ANOTHER ROUND HERE..
OOOOOOOOH.
SAY, GOLLY GEE SIR!! ARE YOU HURT!?...
HUM? ER:.. OOOOOOH...
JUS. JUS, LIFT ME BROKEN AN MUTILATED LITTLE BODY AN PUTS ME ON MY COT.. COUGH' DIS TIME I HAS MASS INTERNAL INJURIES
CAN I SEE?
NO YOU CAN'T SEE YOU WEIRD LITTLE PUNK'...
NOBODY BUT NOBODY GETS TO PEEK UNDER DIS WIZARDS HAT! EVEN I DOESN'T GET A TURN!.. FLUFF UP MY PILLOW KID...
SURE.. HEY ANYWAY WHAT FANTASTIC MYSTICAL DEEP DARK POTION WAS YOU DOIN' DAT DECIDED TO BLOW YOU UP.. HUM?..

LOOK YOU PRYIN LITTLE PERVERT, I ISN'T OUCH" I ISN'T AT LIBERTY TO DISCUSS SECRET SORCERY WIF GENERAL PUBLIC RIFF RAFF... GOT IT?...
GEE...
OH MAN... YOU, YOU IS A GREAT WIZARD CHEECH, YOU CAN DO ANYTHING."
YEAH, YEAH, SURE. LISTEN PIN BRAIN DERS A NICKLE ON DA TABLE, RUN DOWN STAIRS AN BUY ME A PINT TO SOOTH MY SENSITIVE FIBERS...
NOW COME TO THINK ABOUT IT, I CANT UNDERSTAND HOW I GOT A REACTION LIKE DAT FROM MIXIN' SIX MILLS OF SLOWDIAN FARM"... EVEN IF IT WAS A LITTLE YELLOW... LESSSEE, HERE... MUST BE A MISPRINT IN MY SORCERY BOOK... I'LL BET A LITTLE DINKLE OF RED KILLI DODIED IS DA ANSWER...
AHH, MISTER VAN EYKE. I'D LIKE A PINT FOR CHEECH WIZARD PLEASE...
HAW. DAT SLOPPY HAT NEED A LOT MORE DEN ONE TO DROWN OUT HIS SHORT COMINGS!!
TRIUMPH
WHATZAT!
GUESS..
©BOOS '83







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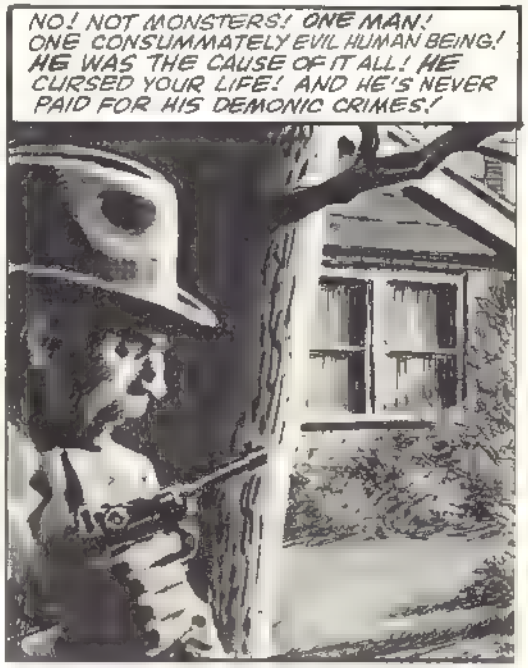
YOUR MEMORIES HAVE LEFT YOU A BITTER, MALICIOUS MAN.

...AS DESPICABLE AS THE MONSTERS WHO DESTROYED EVERYTHING .. EVERYONE YOU'VE EVER LOVED!


NO! NOT MONSTERS! ONE MAN! ONE CONSUMMATELY EVIL HUMAN BEING! HE WAS THE CAUSE OF IT ALL! HE CURSED YOUR LIFE! AND HE'S NEVER PAID FOR HIS DEMONIC CRIMES!

I KNOW WHY YOU'VE COME TO ME, STEFAN JURGIELEWICZ! YOU WANT TO SEE THE GIRL!
THE ONE WHO DIED MORE THAN FORTY YEARS AGO!

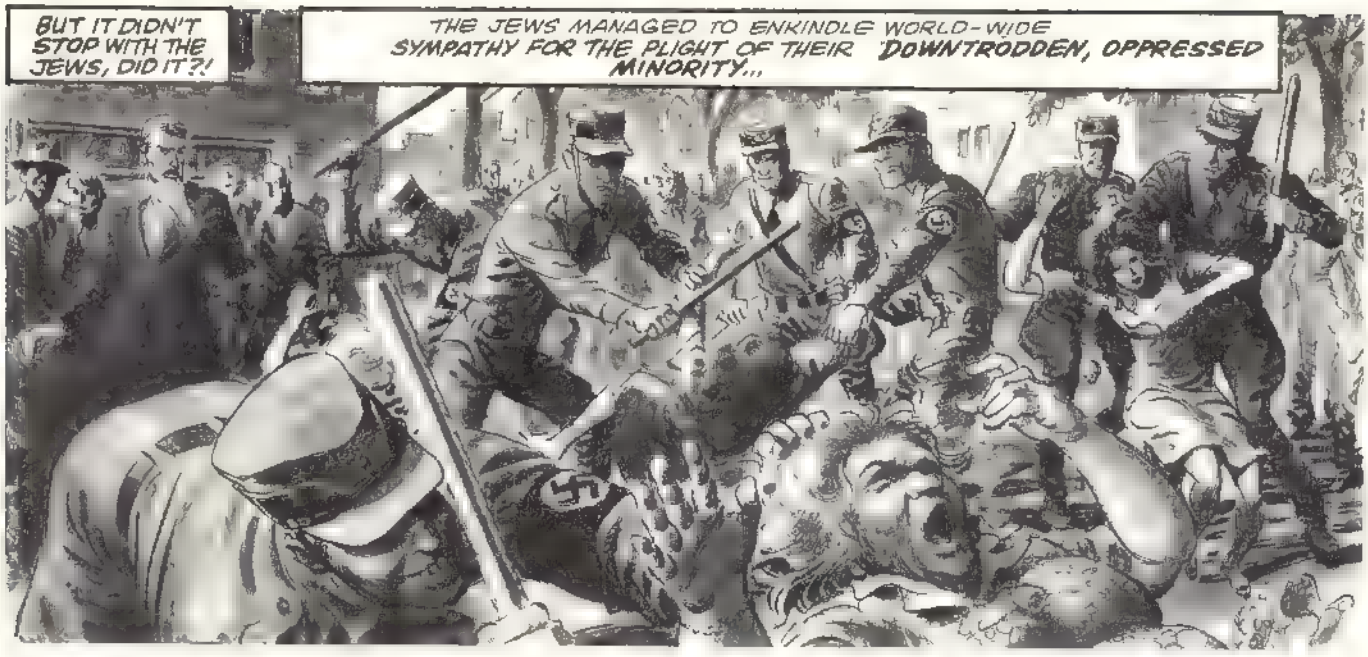
THOUGH MY HEART CRIES OUT TO HELP YOU, I'M UNABLE TO RECALL HER FROM THE DEAD!
HER SOUL IS NO LONGER WITHIN THE SPIRITUAL STREAM!

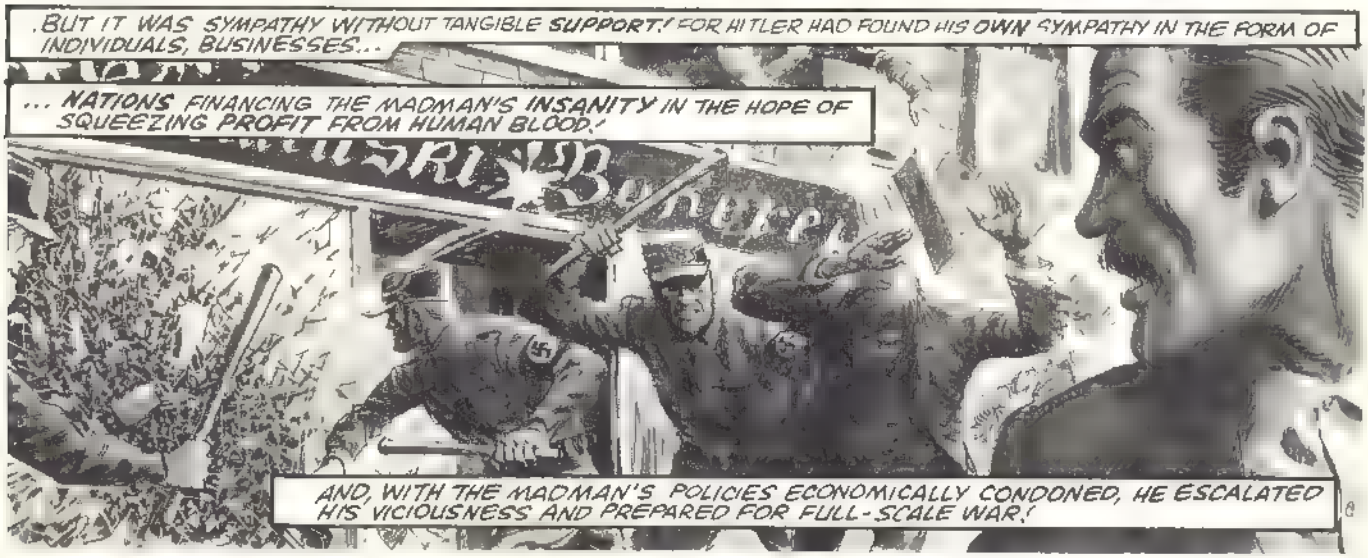
THE GIRL YOU SEEK HAS BEEN BORN AGAIN!
AND, WITHIN THIS LIFETIME, SHE IS FAR HAPPIER THAN SHE'S EVER BEEN!

STILL, I'D BE LESS THAN TRUTHFUL IF I TOLD YOU HER HAPPINESS IS ETERNAL! THE FUTURE WILL BRING HER INFINITE SUFFERING!
IN THE COMING YEARS, SHE'LL ENDURE TENFOLD THAT WHICH SHE'S UNDERGONE IN THE PAST!
I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO CHANGE THE TERRIBLE FUTURE IN STORE FOR HER..IN STORE FOR US ALL! BUT SUCH MANIPULATION OF THE PREORDAINED IS BEYOND THE POWER OF ANY LIVING BEING!
I'M SORRY, STEFAN... FOR THE GIRL... FOR THE MILLIONS WHO WILL DIE BECAUSE OF THE INSANITY OF ONE MAN!
YES! THE ONE YOU FEAR... THE ONE YOU LOATH HAS RETURNED, AS WELL! HE'S A CHILD NOW! BUT SOON, THAT CHILD WILL MATURE..
... AND AGAIN IMMERSE HUMANKIND IN A BLOODY GLOBAL NIGHTMARE...
A NIGHTMARE MORE HEINOUS THAN THE ONE WHICH HAS HAUNTED YOU FOR FORTY AGONIZING YEARS!
FORTY YEARS! YOU WERE A DIFFERENT MAN THEN, STEFAN... SO FULL OF LOVE AND OPTIMISM! YOU WERE A CARETAKER OF THE CHURCH, TENDING TO THE HOLY FATHERS AND THE VESTIBULES OF THEIR FAITH!
BUT... LIKE SO MANY AROUND YOU, YOU WERE WITNESS TO BUDDING HATRED AND FESTERING INSANITY!

REBIRTH!
YOU, STEFAN JURGIELEWICZ, WERE WITNESS TO ARMAGEDDON!
AND, AFTER HAVING BEEN IMMERSED IN THE FLAMES OF HELL... YOU SURVIVED!

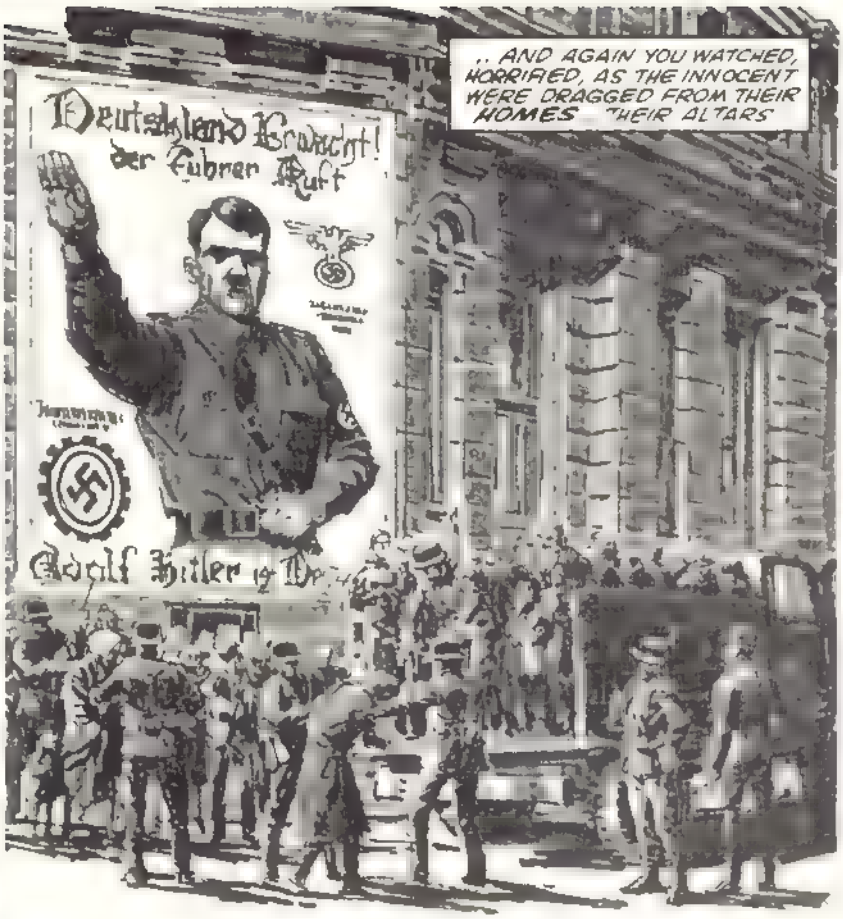
YOU REMEMBER ALL TOO WELL HOW IT STARTED, DON'T YOU, STEFAN? WITH THE JEWS AND GERMANY'S NÜRNBERG LAWS OF 1935... THOSE CRIMINAL EDICTS WHICH ALLOWED HUMAN BEINGS TO BE DRAGGED FROM THEIR HOMES, AND CAGED LIKE CATTLE BEING LED TO THE SLAUGHTERHOUSES!
YOU WERE APPALLED, ENRAGED AND TERRIFIED! BUT... BECAUSE YOU WERE A POLISH IMMIGRANT IN A LAND WHERE IMMIGRANTS WERE SPIT UPON . AND BECAUSE YOU FEARED FOR YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY...
...YOU REMAINED SILENT!
AND YOUR SILENCE, LIKE THAT OF YOUR ADOPTED COUNTRYMEN, ALLOWED THE MADMAN TO HAVE HIS WAY!
YOU FELT TERRIBLE ABOUT IT, OF COURSE! APPROPRIATE PANGS OF GUILT STABBED AT YOUR ANGUISHED CONSCIENCE! STILL, YOU THANKED YOUR BENEVOLENT GOD THAT YOUR PEOPLE . THE POLES. THE CATHOLICS.. HAD BEEN SPARED SIMILAR DEGRADATION... HUMILIATION... SUFFERING!


BUT IT DIDN'T STOP WITH THE JEWS, DID IT?!
THE JEWS MANAGED TO ENKINDLE WORLD-WIDE SYMPATHY FOR THE PLIGHT OF THEIR DOWNTRODDEN, OPPRESSED MINORITY...


.BUT IT WAS SYMPATHY WITHOUT TANGIBLE SUPPORT! FOR HITLER HAD FOUND HIS OWN SYMPATHY IN THE FORM OF INDIVIDUALS, BUSINESSES...
... NATIONS FINANCING THE MADMAN'S INSANITY IN THE HOPE OF SQUEEZING PROFIT FROM HUMAN BLOOD!
AND, WITH THE MADMAN'S POLICIES ECONOMICALLY CONDONED, HE ESCALATED HIS VICIOUSNESS AND PREPARED FOR FULL-SCALE WAR!

HIS CONCORDAT WITH THE VATICAN DID AS LITTLE TO PROTECT GERMAN CATHOLICS FROM HARASSMENT AS THE LOCARNO PACT DID TO SAVE POLAND FROM HIS CRUSHING ARMIES!
TO BE CATHOLIC IN NAZI GERMANY IN 1939 WAS AS MUCH A CRIME AGAINST THE STATE AS WAS BEING POLISH WHEN POLES WERE BEING EXTERMINATED IN THEIR OWN INVIOLATE HOMELAND!

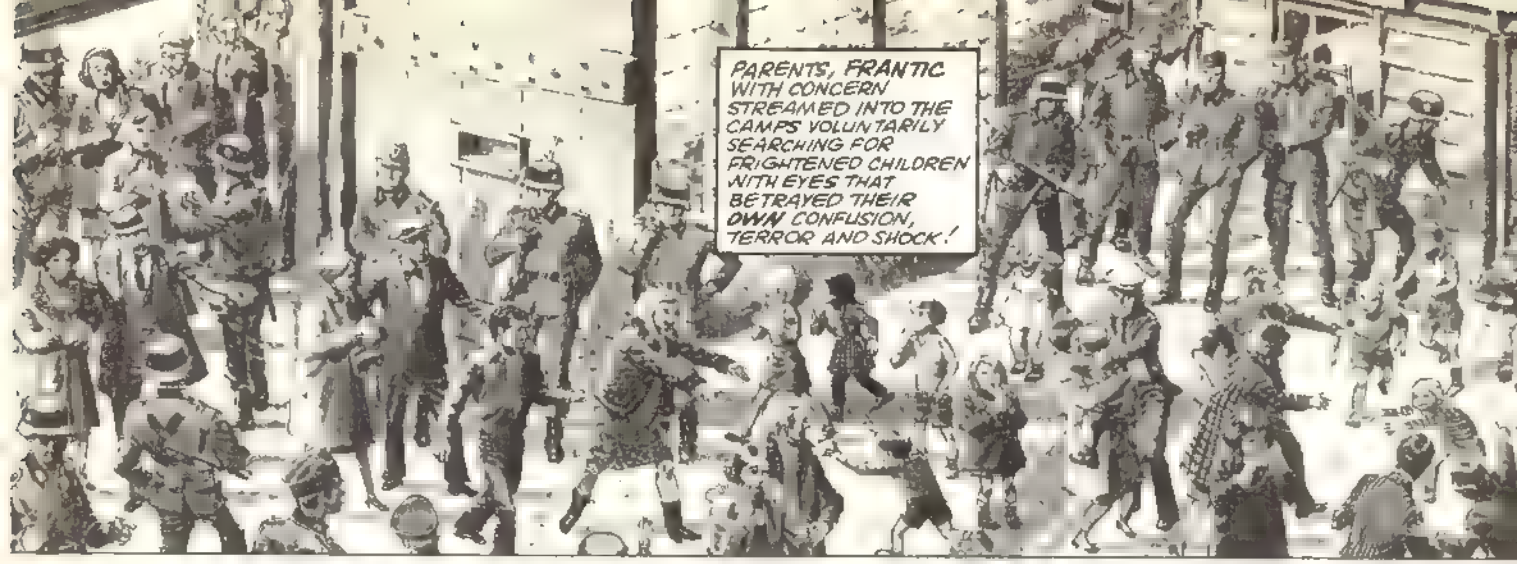
YOU SAW IT HAPPENING! THE WHOLE WORLD SAW! BUT NO ONE FOUGHT TO STOP IT! AGAIN, THE INSANITY WAS PERPETUATED...

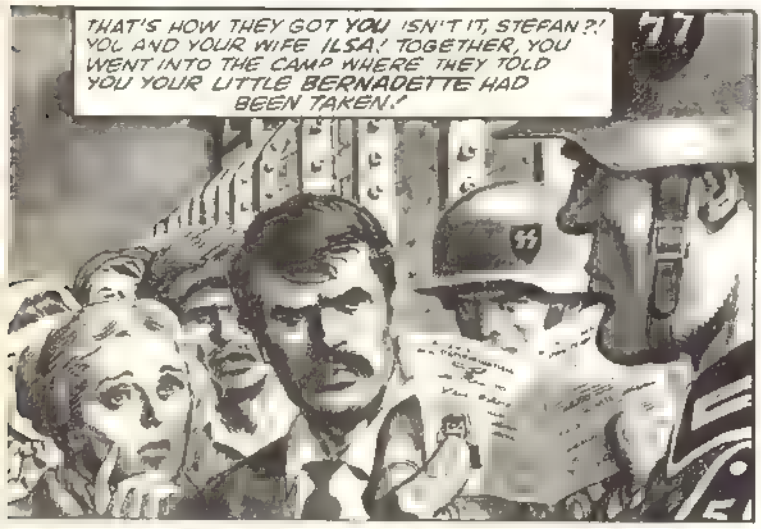

.. AND AGAIN YOU WATCHED, HORRIFIED, AS THE INNOCENT WERE DRAGGED FROM THEIR HOMES "THEIR ALTARS
Deutschland Erwacht!
der Führer Ruft
Adolf Hitler

... AS STORMTROOPERS' INVADED THE NEW BATTLE-FRONT... CLASSROOMS... ASSAULTING HOLY WOMEN AND HELPLESS CHILDREN, FOR THE NEFARIOUS SIN OF BEING IN THE WRONG RELIGION...

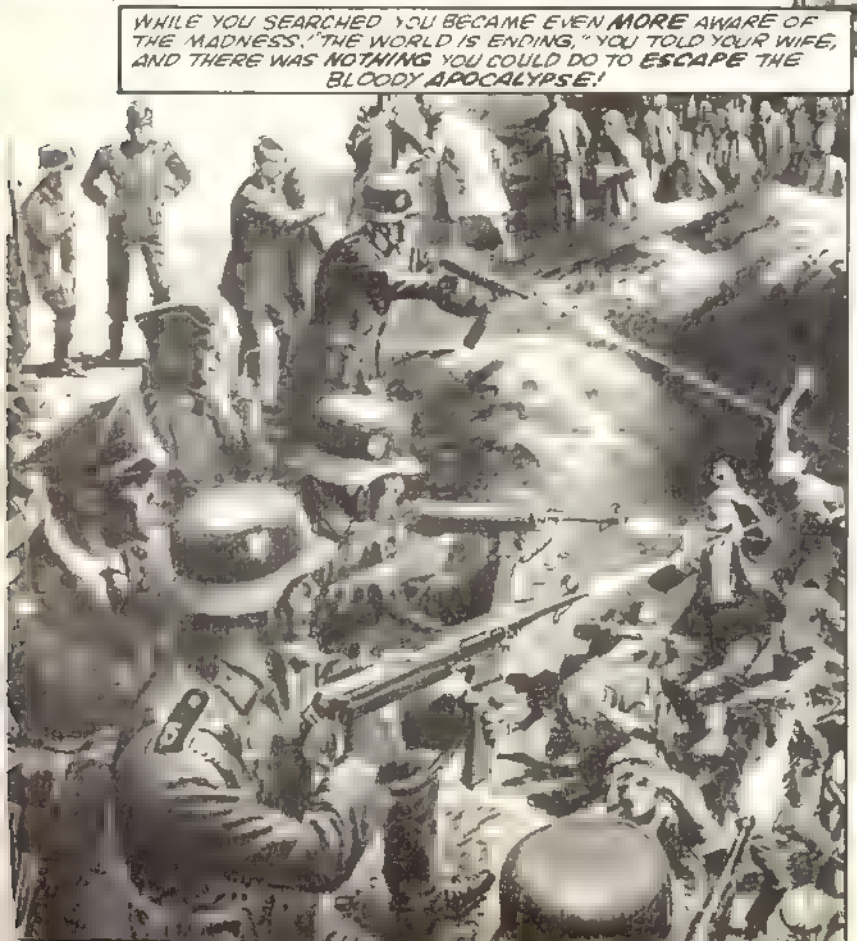
OF CRIMINALLY HARBORING THE GENES OF THE ETHNICALLY IMPOVERISHED!"

A PART OF YOU WANTED TO DIE, STEFAN JURGIELEWICZ, AS YOU WATCHED CHILDREN LOADED ONTO TRUCKS SHIPPED AWAY CRYING, PLEADING, TERRIFIED AND CONFUSED.
...TO SPECIAL CAMPS REEKING OF BURNING DEATH'

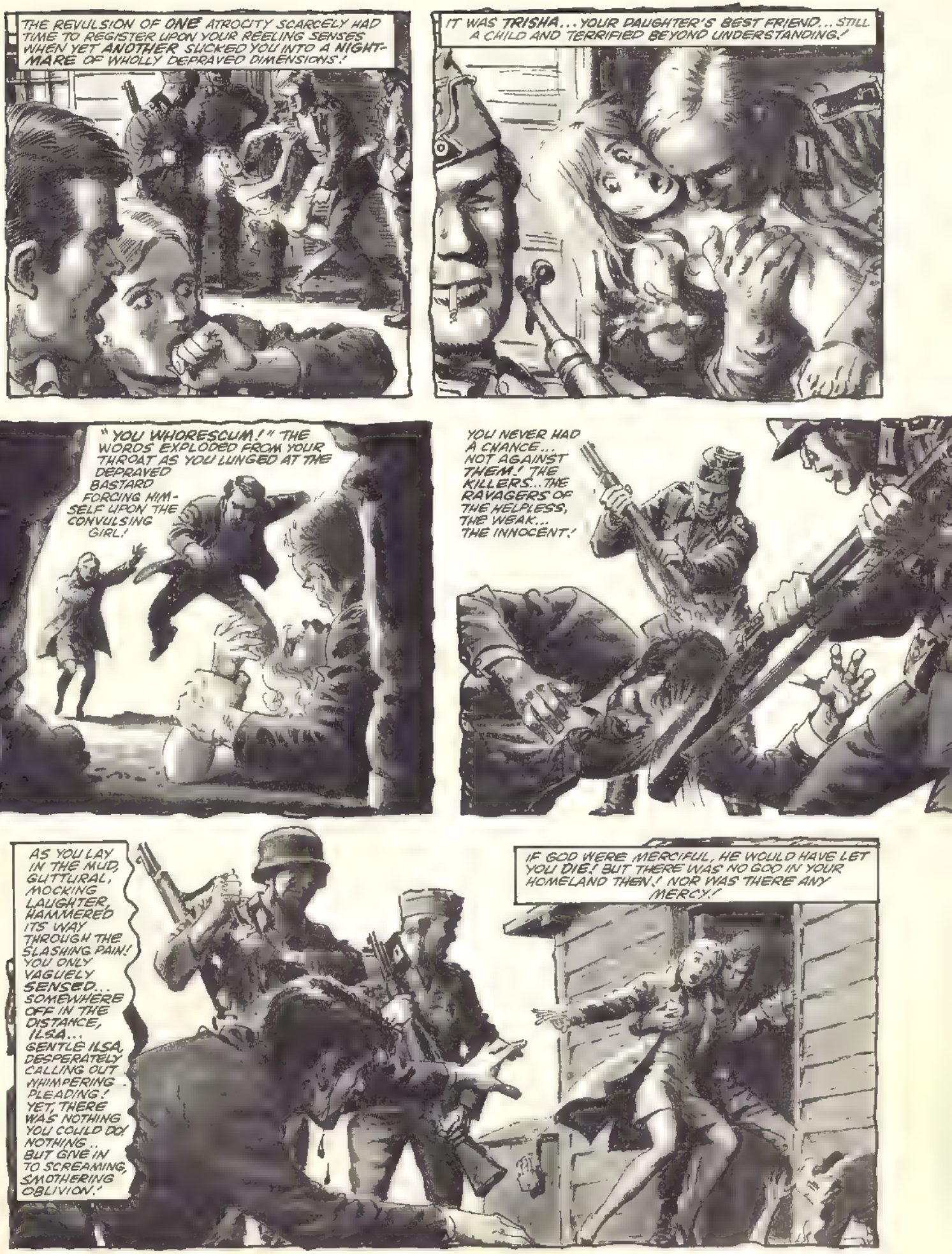

PARENTS, FRANTIC WITH CONCERN STREAMED INTO THE CAMPS VOLUNTARILY SEARCHING FOR FRIGHTENED CHILDREN WITH EYES THAT BETRAYED THEIR OWN CONFUSION, TERROR AND SHOCK!


THAT'S HOW THEY GOT YOU ISN'T IT, STEFAN?! YOU AND YOUR WIFE ILSA! TOGETHER, YOU WENT INTO THE CAMP WHERE THEY TOLD YOU YOUR LITTLE BERNADETTE HAD BEEN TAKEN!

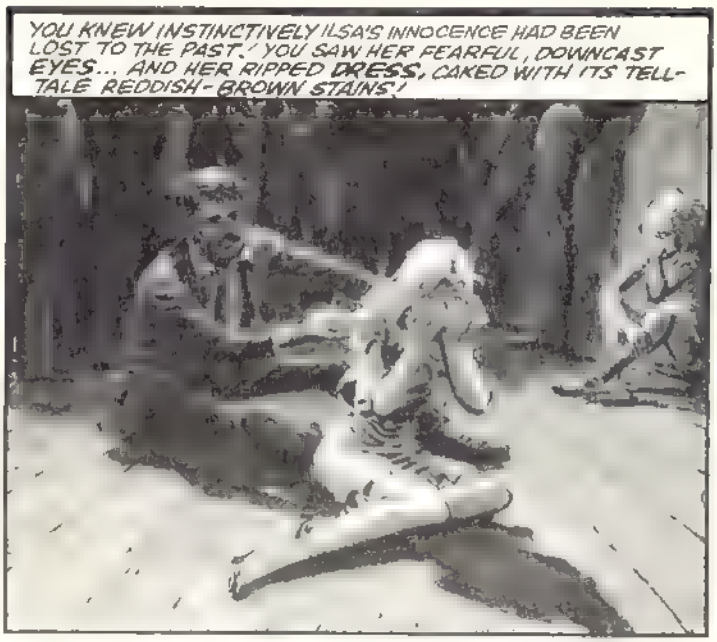
YOU SEARCHED, SCREAMING HER NAME, TRYING TO BE HEARD OVER THE SHRIEKS OF CHILDREN SEEKING THEIR MOTHERS... OF DESPERATE AND FRIGHTENED MOTHERS SEARCHING FOR THEIR YOUNG!

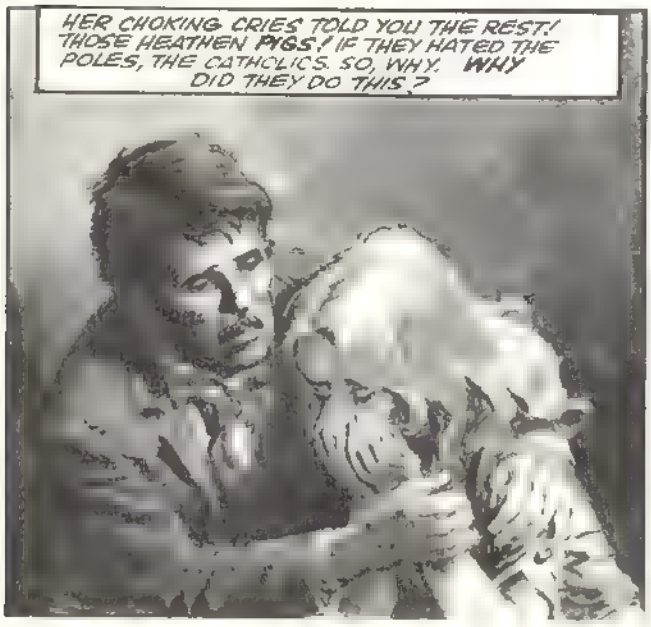

WHILE YOU SEARCHED YOU BECAME EVEN MORE AWARE OF THE MADNESS. "THE WORLD IS ENDING," YOU TOLD YOUR WIFE, AND THERE WAS NOTHING YOU COULD DO TO ESCAPE THE BLOODY APOCALYPSE!

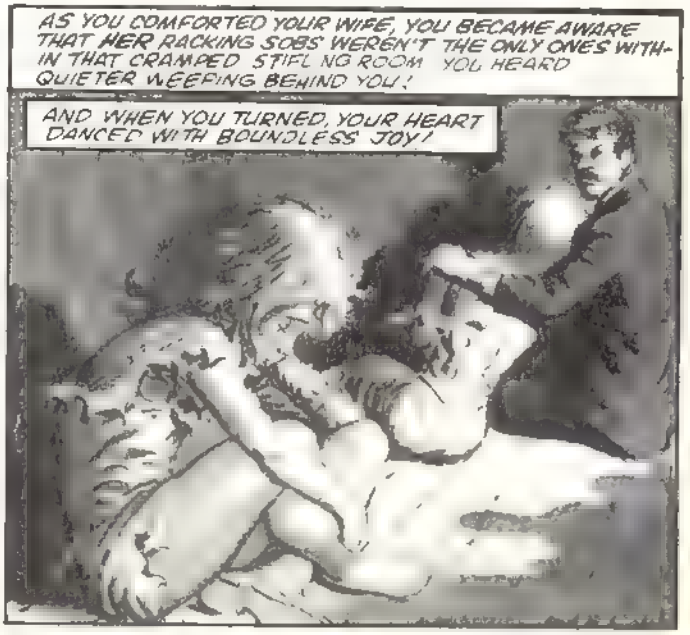
IT WAS LUNACY OF UNDREAMED, OF UNIMAGINED PROPORTIONS! YOU CHOKED ON YOUR OWN BILE YOU STUMBLED UPON YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER. THE SAME HOLY SISTER WHO HAD TAUGHT HER OF THE MERCY OF JESUS CHRIST!


THE REVULSION OF ONE ATROCITY SCARCELY HAD TIME TO REGISTER UPON YOUR REELING SENSES WHEN YET ANOTHER SUCKED YOU INTO A NIGHT-MARE OF WHOLLY DEPRAVED DIMENSIONS!
IT WAS TRISHA... YOUR DAUGHTER'S BEST FRIEND... STILL A CHILD AND TERRIFIED BEYOND UNDERSTANDING!
"YOU WHORESCUM!" THE WORDS EXPLODED FROM YOUR THROAT AS YOU LUNGED AT THE DEPRAVED BASTARD FORCING HIM-SELF UPON THE CONVULSING GIRL!
YOU NEVER HAD A CHANCE... NOT AGAINST THEM! THE KILLERS... THE RAVAGERS OF THE HELPLESS, THE WEAK... THE INNOCENT!
AS YOU LAY IN THE MUD, GUTTURAL, MOCKING LAUGHTER HAMMERED ITS WAY THROUGH THE SLASHING PAIN! YOU ONLY VAGUELY SENSED... SOMEWHERE OFF IN THE DISTANCE, ILSA... GENTLE ILSA, DESPERATELY CALLING OUT WHIMPERING... PLEADING! YET, THERE WAS NOTHING YOU COULD DO! NOTHING... BUT GIVE IN TO SCREAMING, SMOTHERING OBLIVION!
IF GOD WERE MERCIFUL, HE WOULD HAVE LET YOU DIE! BUT THERE WAS NO GOD IN YOUR HOMELAND THEN! NOR WAS THERE ANY MERCY!

WHEN YOU REGAINED YOUR SENSES, THE FIRST FACE YOU SAW WAS THAT OF YOUR BELOVED WIFE ONCE SO SPRITELY, SO INNOCENT OF A TREACHEROUS WORLD'S WAYS!


YOU KNEW INSTINCTIVELY ILSA'S INNOCENCE HAD BEEN LOST TO THE PAST. / YOU SAW HER FEARFUL, DOWNCAST EYES... AND HER RIPPED DRESS, CAKED WITH ITS TELLTALE REDDISH-BROWN STAINS!


HER CHOKING CRIES TOLD YOU THE REST! THOSE HEATHEN PIGS! IF THEY HATED THE POLES, THE CATHOLICS. SO, WHY. WHY DID THEY DO THIS?


AS YOU COMFORTED YOUR WIFE, YOU BECAME AWARE THAT HER RACKING SOBS WEREN'T THE ONLY ONES WITHIN THAT CRAMPED STIFLING ROOM YOU HEARD QUIETER WEEPING BEHIND YOU!
AND WHEN YOU TURNED, YOUR HEART DANCED WITH BOUNDLESS JOY!

ELATION, RELIEF, GRATITUDE AT THE SIGHT OF YOUR LOVELY BERNADETTE LOOSENED THE TEARS IN YOUR ALREADY SWOLLEN EYES! A LUMP OF HAPPINESS WEDGED SOLIDLY IN YOUR THROAT.

...BUT YOUR HAPPINESS WAS STILLBORN BY THE CHILD'S RINGING SCREAMS! SHE CRINGED AND CRAWLED QUICKLY AWAY FROM YOU! AND YOU COULD SEE OH, GOD, YOU COULD SEE EVERY MOMENT OF THE NIGHTMARE SHE'D EXPERIENCED MIRRORED TORMENTINGLY IN HER INSANELY-GLAZED EYES!

IT WAS CLEAR WHAT THE **NAZI SWINE** HAD DONE! OH, **GOD**! YOUR BEAUTIFUL, INNOCENT, EIGHT-YEAR-OLD CHILD.!

HATE! LIVID BLACK, HELL-BORNE HATE CLAWED AT YOUR EVERY SHATTERED NERVE!

YOU KNEW **THEN** THAT THE TORMENT ALREADY BEFALLEN YOUR FAMILY WAS A SIMPLE PRELUDE TO THE GREATER AGONY STILL TO COME.!

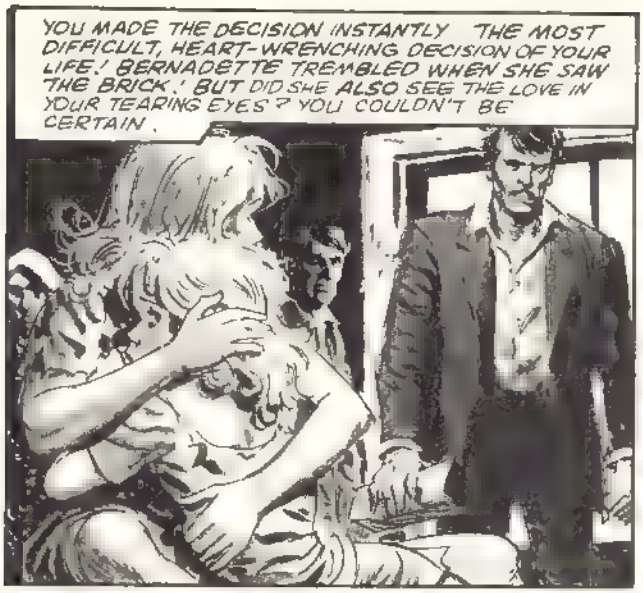
BESIDE YOU, YOUR WIFE CRADLED YOUR WHIMPERING CHILD... WHILE YOU STOOD STARING AND GAGGING ON A STENCH UNLIKE **ANY** YOU'D EVER KNOWN.!

WHEN YOU SAW THE **OVENS** YOU UNDERSTOOD! THE **BASTARDS**! NOW THEY WERE USING HUMAN BEINGS TO WARM THEIR DAMNABLE CAMPS.!

CATHOLICS! JEWS! NUNS.! PRIESTS! RUSSIANS! POLES! THE DEFORMED.! THE INSANE! IT DIDN'T MATTER! THEY WERE NO LONGER PEOPLE.! THEY WERE SIMPLY FUEL TO BE CONSUMED IN THE OVENS. TO BE EXTINGUISHED FROM THE EARTH FOREVER.!

YOU KNEW THE TIME WOULD COME WHEN YOUR **WIFE**... YOUR **DAUGHTER** WOULD BE TOSSED INTO THE SAME RAGING FURNACES.! NO DOUBT, YOU WOULD BE FIRST, WHILE ILSA AND BERNADETTE WERE SPARED... UNTIL YOUR TORMENTORS TIRED OF THEIR UNRESPONSIVE AFFECTIONS.

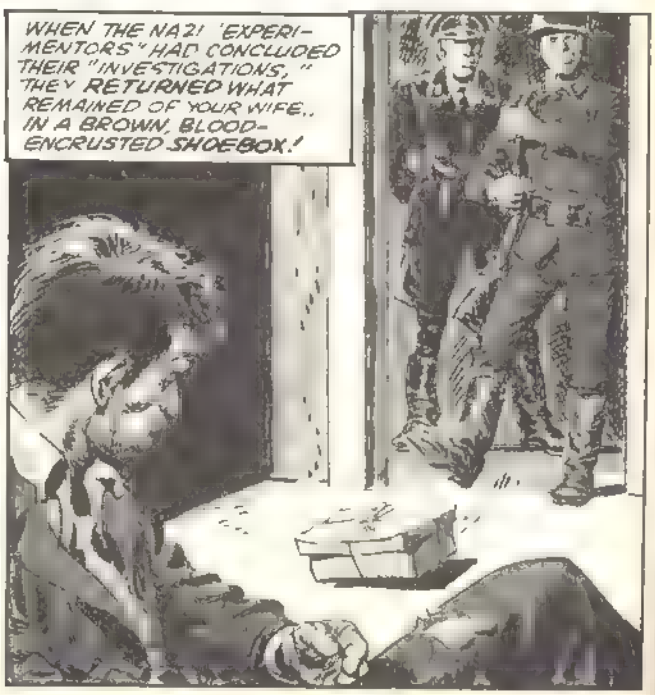
BUT **THAT** WAS SOMETHING YOU WOULDN'T ALLOW.!

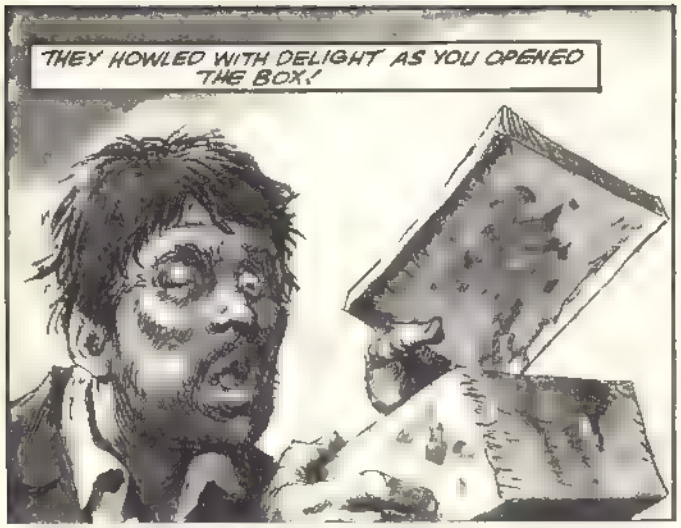

YOU MADE THE DECISION INSTANTLY THE MOST DIFFICULT, HEART-WRENCHING DECISION OF YOUR LIFE.! BERNADETTE TREMBLED WHEN SHE SAW THE BRICK.! BUT DID SHE ALSO SEE THE LOVE IN YOUR TEARING EYES? YOU COULDN'T BE CERTAIN.

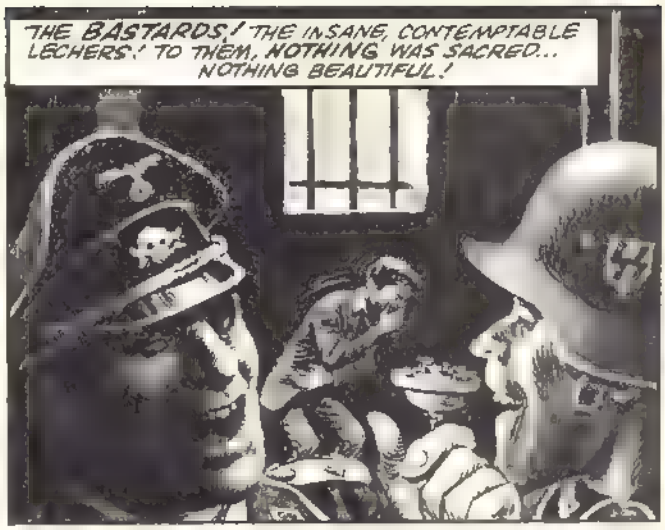
SHE WAS DEAD BEFORE THE BRICK SHATTERED HER SKULL.! SHE DIED WHEN THE NAZI PIGS FIRST TOUCHED HER.! ALL YOU DID WAS SPARE HER BODY FROM FURTHER DESECRATION!
AND YOU PRAY SHE UNDERSTOOD

BUT ILSA THE SIGHT PUSHED HER OVER SANITY'S EDGE ! HER PERSISTANT HYSTERICAL WAILS ROUSED THE GUARDS... WHO DRAGGED HER AWAY KICKING, BITING, SCREAMING, FIGHTING TO A FATE MORE HEINOUS THAN ANY YOU BELIEVED THE HUMAN MIND COULD CONCEIVE!

THROUGH THE PAIN OF HARD BOOTS THUDDING AGAINST YOUR FACE OF RIFLE BUTTS SLAMMING INTO YOUR BODY, YOU HEARD YOUR WIFE'S FINAL, AGONIZED TORMENT.!


WHEN THE NAZI 'EXPERIMENTORS" HAD CONCLUDED THEIR "INVESTIGATIONS," THEY RETURNED WHAT REMAINED OF YOUR WIFE.. IN A BROWN, BLOOD-ENCRUSTED SHOEBOX.!

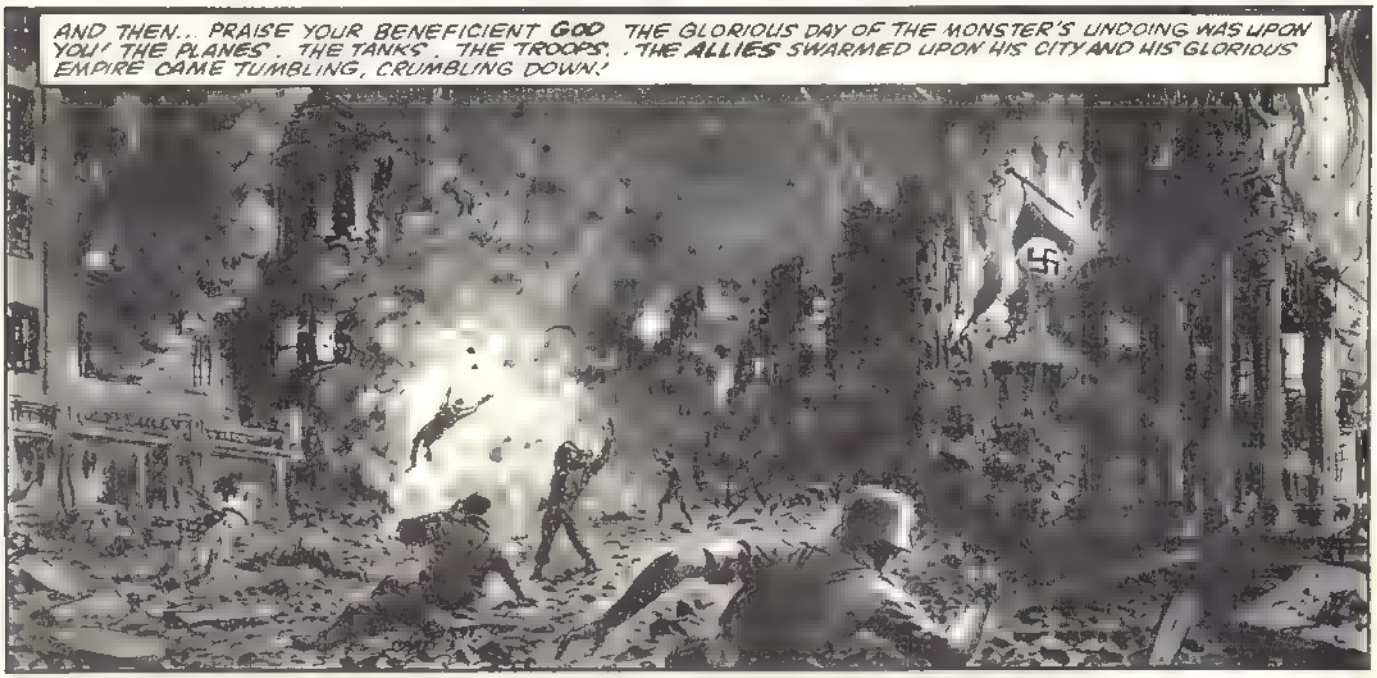

THEY HOWLED WITH DELIGHT AS YOU OPENED THE BOX!


THE BASTARDS! THE INSANE, CONTEMPTABLE LECHERS! TO THEM, NOTHING WAS SACRED... NOTHING BEAUTIFUL!

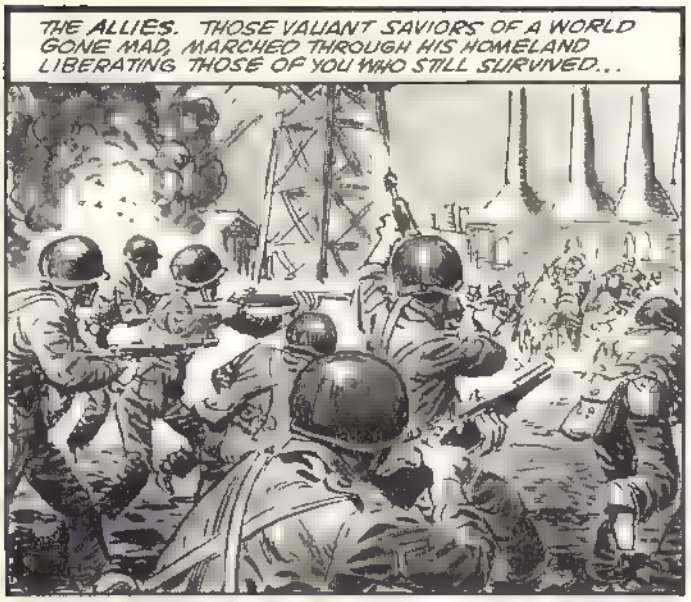
THEY PLACED YOU IN THE CAMP LABOR FORCE AFTER THAT... DIGGING MASS GRAVES... SHOVELING CHARRED GORE FROM THE OVENS PIECES OF HUMAN MEAT THAT HADN'T BEEN WHOLLY OBLITERATED BY THE FLAMES!
AND ALL THE WHILE, THE BUTCHERS CONTINUED THEIR MURDEROUS EXPERIMENTS! BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAMS AND PITIFUL WAILS REVERBERATED THROUGH THE CAMP INCESSANTLY! IT WAS THE CACOPHONIC SYMPHONY OF ARMAGEDDON... APPROPRIATE DEMONIC ACCOMPANIMENT FOR PERFORMING THE SENSES-NUMBING CHORES OF HELL!

YOU OFTEN THOUGHT ABOUT FLINGING YOURSELF INTO THE BLAZING OVENS! YOUR TORMENTORS WOULD HAVE ENJOYED YOUR PERFORMANCE! THEY DELIGHTED IN SEEING LIVE BODIES WRITHE, KICK AND SCREAM WHILE THE FLAMES RIPPED AT THEIR SHRIVELING, BLACKENING FLESH!
YOU WOULDN'T GIVE THEM THAT, WOULD YOU, STEFAN?! YOU STILL WANTED SOMETHING OUT OF LIFE!

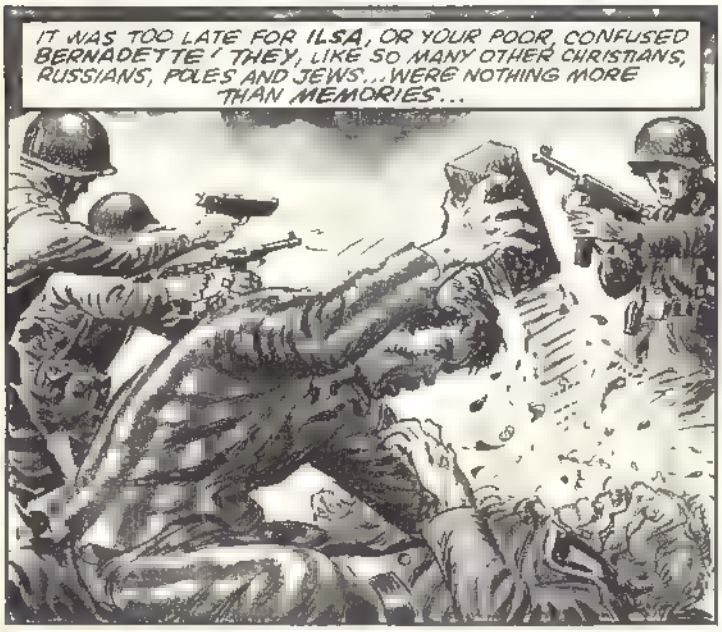
YOU WANTED TO SEE THE MONSTER BEHIND THE MADNESS SUFFER...TO ENDURE TORMENT A THOUSAND TIMES GREATER THAN THAT WHICH HE'D THRUST UPON ILSA, BERNADETTE AND SO MANY OTHERS!

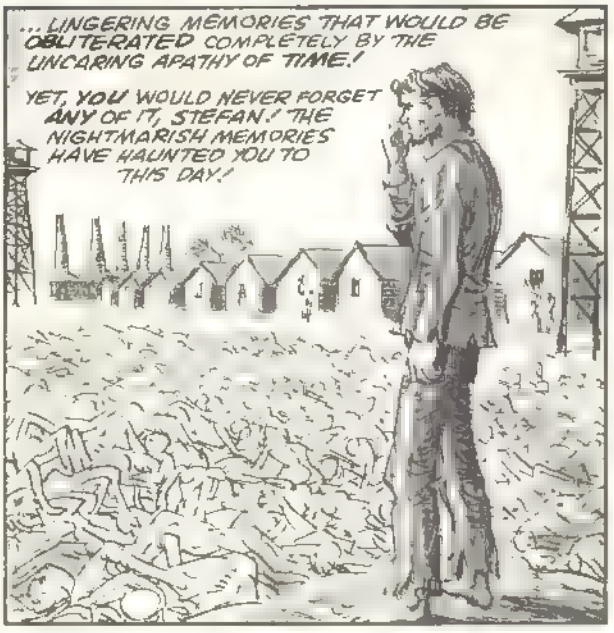

AND THEN... PRAISE YOUR BENEFICIENT GOD YOU! THE PLANES. THE TANKS. THE TROOPS. THE GLORIOUS DAY OF THE MONSTER'S UNDOING WAS UPON EMPIRE CAME TUMBLING, CRUMBLING DOWN! . THE ALLIES SWARMED UPON HIS CITY AND HIS GLORIOUS

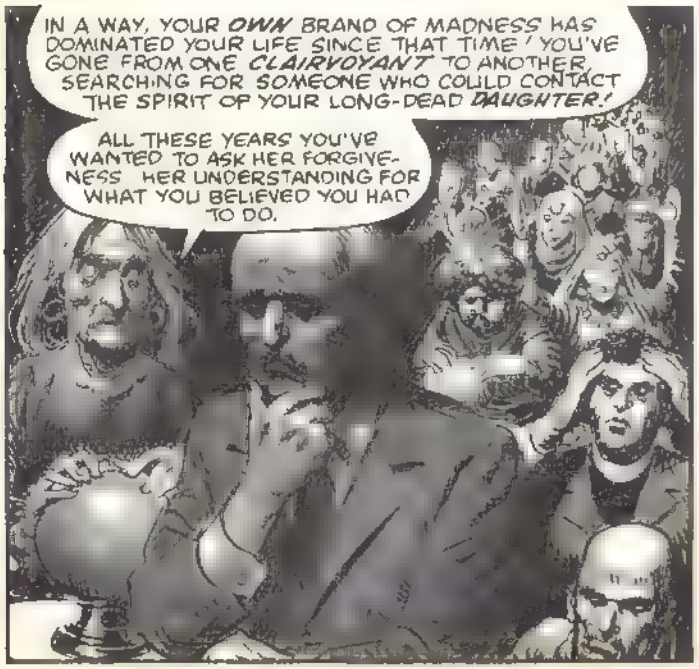
AND THAT COWARDLY LITTLE CUR... THAT SCUM-EATING WORM, QUAKING IN FEAR OVER WHAT HIS ENEMIES WOULD DO TO HIM.. PUT A GUN TO HIS HEAD AND ENDED THE REIGN OF TERROR THAT HAD CLAIMED TWENTY-SIX MILLION INNOCENT LIVES!


THE ALLIES. THOSE VALIANT SAVIORS OF A WORLD GONE MAD, MARCHED THROUGH HIS HOMELAND LIBERATING THOSE OF YOU WHO STILL SURVIVED...

. ENDING ONCE AND FOR ALL ANY INSANITY THAT LINGERED ON!


IT WAS TOO LATE FOR ILSA, OR YOUR POOR, CONFUSED BERNADETTE! THEY, LIKE SO MANY OTHER CHRISTIANS, RUSSIANS, POLES AND JEWS...WERE NOTHING MORE THAN MEMORIES...

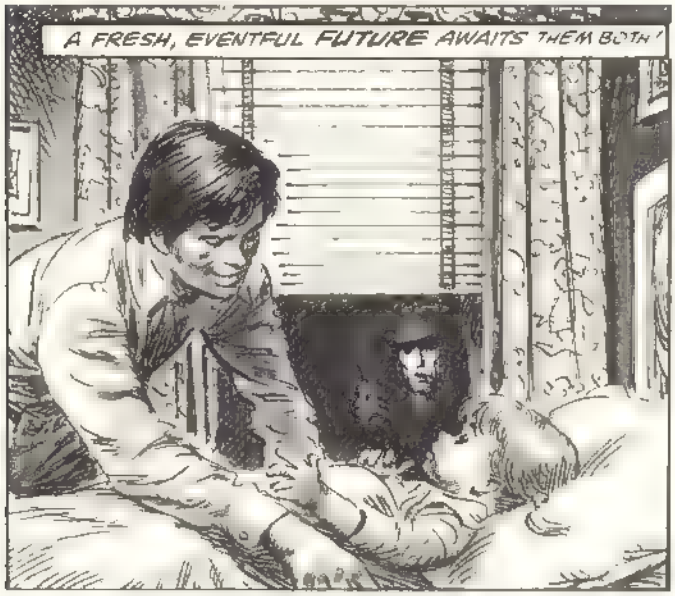

...LINGERING MEMORIES THAT WOULD BE OBLITERATED COMPLETELY BY THE UNCARING APATHY OF TIME!
YET, YOU WOULD NEVER FORGET ANY OF IT, STEFAN! THE NIGHTMARISH MEMORIES HAVE HAUNTED YOU TO THIS DAY!


IN A WAY, YOUR OWN BRAND OF MADNESS HAS DOMINATED YOUR LIFE SINCE THAT TIME! YOU'VE GONE FROM ONE CLAIRVOYANT TO ANOTHER, SEARCHING FOR SOMEONE WHO COULD CONTACT THE SPIRIT OF YOUR LONG-DEAD DAUGHTER!
ALL THESE YEARS YOU'VE WANTED TO ASK HER FORGIVENESS HER UNDERSTANDING FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVED YOU HAD TO DO.

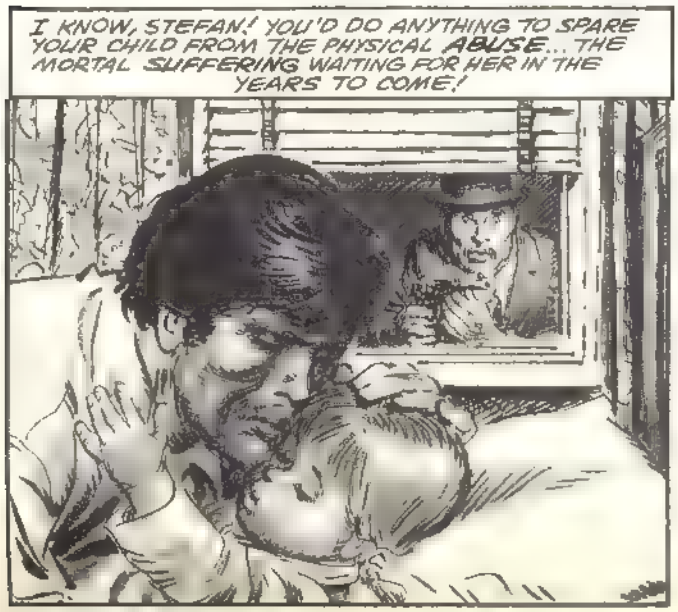
BUT THAT CONTACT WITH THE UNKNOWN HAS NEVER BEEN NECESSARY! YOUR LITTLE GIRL HAS NEVER BLAMED YOU!
EVEN IN DEATH SHE RETURNED THE LOVE SHE'D RESERVED ONLY FOR YOU, IN LIFE!

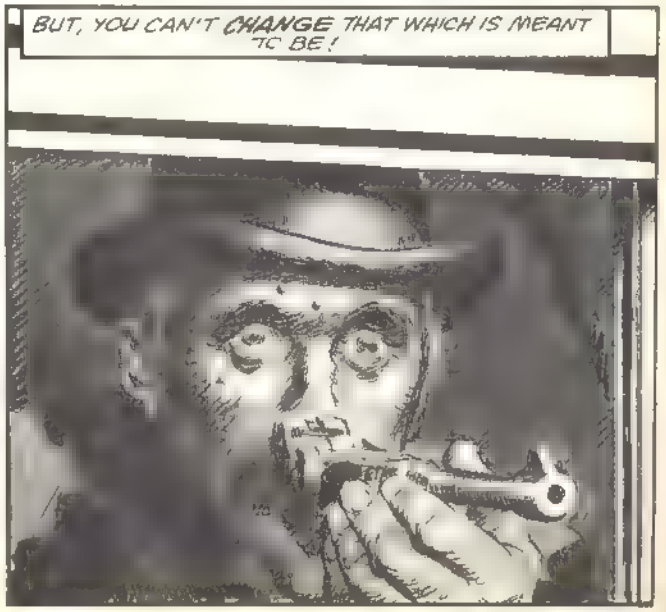
BUT TO HER, DEATH ISN'T EVEN A MEMORY! HER SPIRIT HAS RETURNED TO EARTH IN ANOTHER INCARNATION, ON ITS CYCLIC JOURNEY THROUGH ETERNITY!

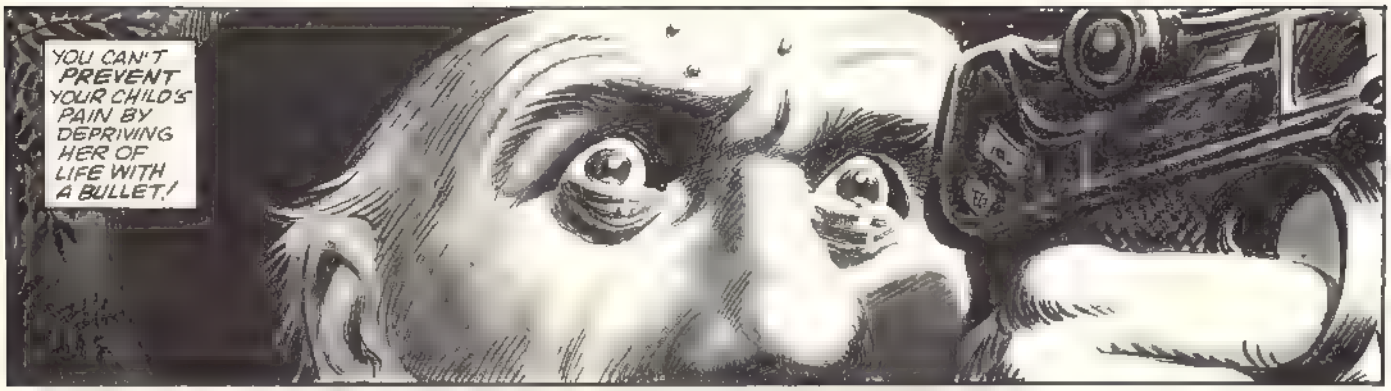
SHE'S NO LONGER THE CHILD YOU REMEMBER. JUST AS THAT OTHER SOUL IS NO LONGER THE MALICIOUS CANCER THAT PLUNGED THE WORLD INTO GLOBAL WAR!


A FRESH, EVENTFUL FUTURE AWAITS THEM BOTH!

AND WHILE HISTORY WILL REPEAT ITSELF, THERE'S UTTLE YOUR LOVE OR HATE CAN DO TO HALT THAT HEADLONG PLUNGE TOWARD THE INEVITABLE!

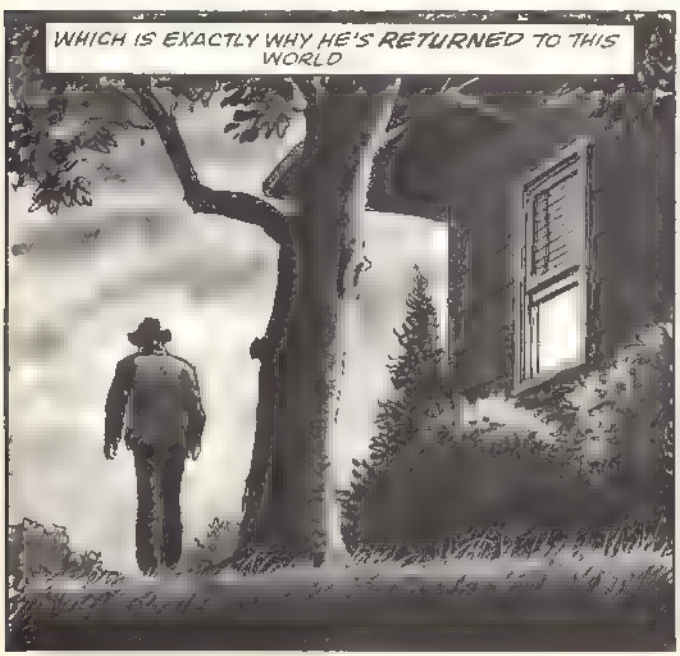

I KNOW, STEFAN! YOU'D DO ANYTHING TO SPARE YOUR CHILD FROM THE PHYSICAL ABUSE... THE MORTAL SUFFERING WAITING FOR HER IN THE YEARS TO COME!

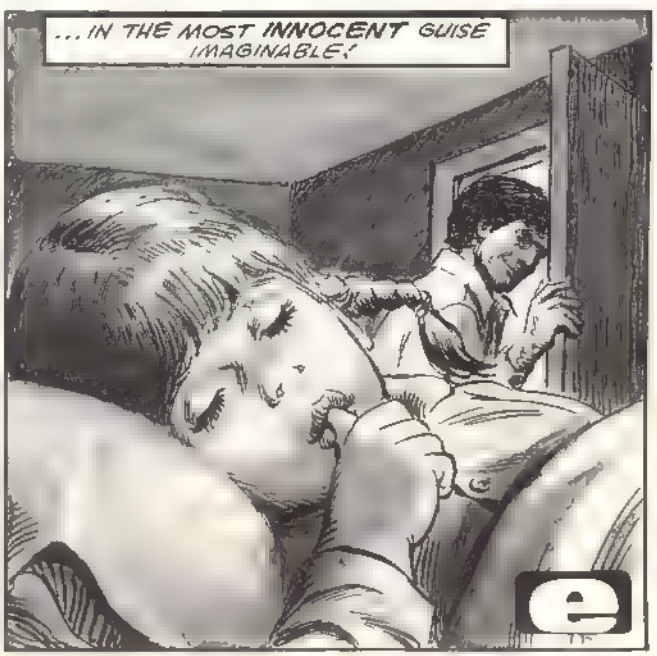

BUT, YOU CAN'T CHANGE THAT WHICH IS MEANT TO BE!


YOU CAN'T PREVENT YOUR CHILD'S PAIN BY DEPRIVING HER OF LIFE WITH A BULLET!

SHE'LL SIMPLY BE BORN AGAIN! AND THAT SAME IRREVOCABLE FUTURE WILL STILL BE WAITING TO CLAIM HER!

NO, STEFAN! YOU'VE SUFFERED TOO LONG! YOU'VE WITNESSED TOO MUCH AGONY AND DEATH! YOU'VE SEEN FAR TOO MANY INNOCENT PEOPLE BRUTALIZED, BUTCHERED, EXTERMINATED!
DER FUEHRER UNDERSTANDS THAT! HE KNOWS THAT THE NEXT TIME THE WORLD WON'T BE SO EASILY DECEIVED BY THE RANTINGS OF A MURDEROUSLY CLEVER MIND!


WHICH IS EXACTLY WHY HE'S RETURNED TO THIS WORLD


... IN THE MOST INNOCENT GUISE IMAGINABLE!

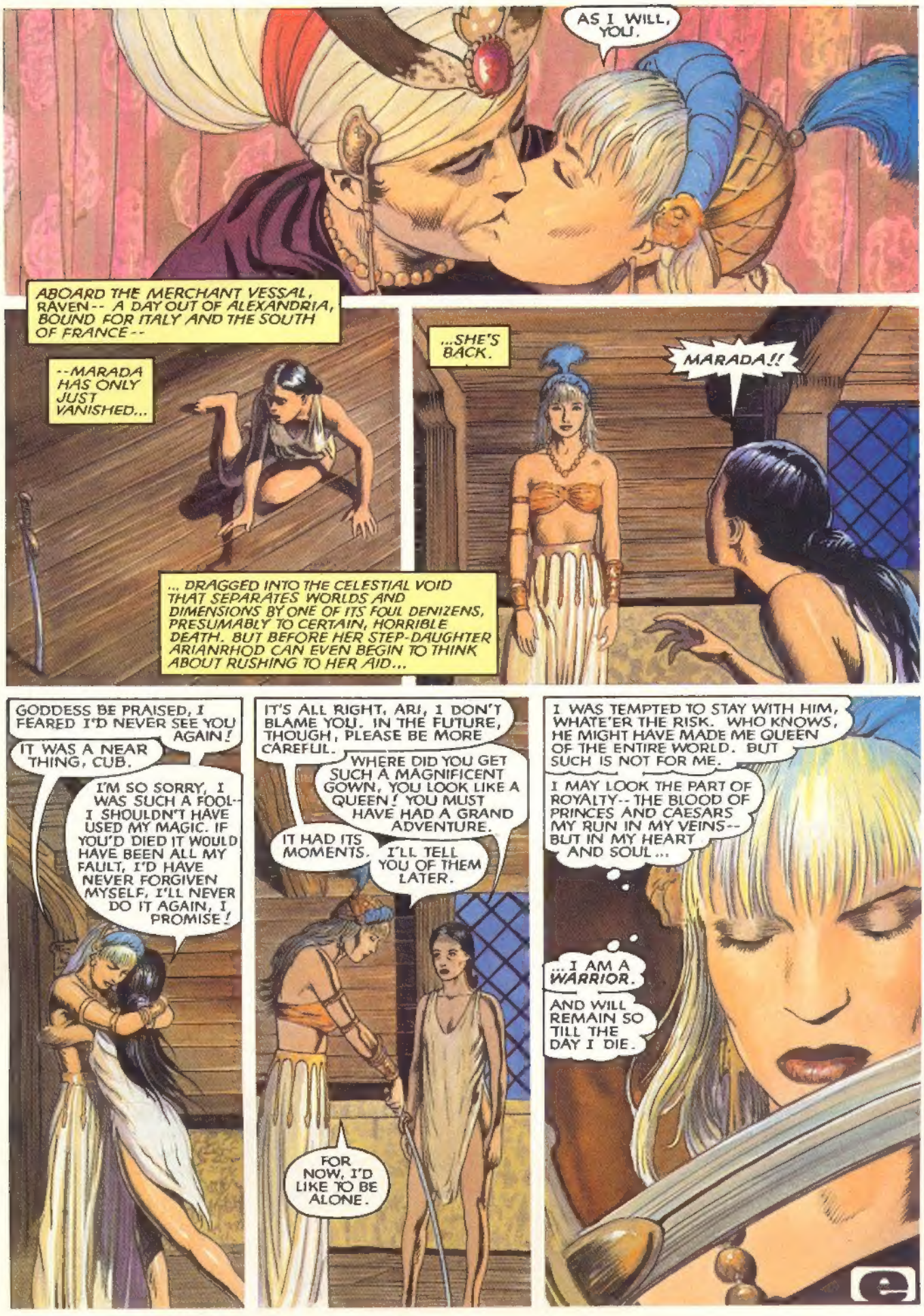
TOO STUBBORN TO DROWN
TOO DAMN STUPID TO DIE
AND TOO COURAGEOUS TO SURRENDER.
I SALUTE YOU, MARADA-- BUT DID YOU REALLY THINK YOU'D ESCAPE SO EASILY?
DID YOU THINK I WOULDN'T TRY?
YOU MERELY DELAYED THE INEVITABLE. YOUR CAUSE WAS HOPELESS FROM THE START.
Y'GARON SAID MUCH THE SAME THING, WIZARD--

-- BEFORE I RAN HIM THROUGH!
I... I STRUCK FOR THE HEART--?!!
SORCERERS HAVE NO HEART, DIDN'T YOU KNOW --AT LEAST, NONE THAT CAN BE PIERCED BY ORDINARY, MAN-FORGED STEEL.
HOW SAD YOU DON'T HAVE THE ENCHANTED BLADE I'M TOLD YOU USED TO SLAY Y'GARON AND HIS PET MAGICIAN.
STILL, IT WAS YOUR WISH TO FACE ME, SWORD-TO-SWORD...
... AND A COURTEOUS HOST DOES HIS BEST TO ACCEDE TO HIS GUEST'S EVERY DESIRE.
HER SKILL IS LEGEND THROUGH-OUT THE KNOWN WORLD. EVEN WORN AND WOUNDED AS SHE IS, MARADA IS A MATCH FOR ANY FOE.
BUT EACH TIME SHE HURLS HER BLADE AT JAFFAR, HIS IS THERE TO MEET IT. AND THOUGH SHE HOLDS HER OWN AT FIRST ..

... IT ISN'T LONG BEFORE SHE IS ON THE DEFENSIVE, DESPERATELY PARRYING HIS ATTACKS, HER FACE TOUCHED WITH THE FATAL REALIZATION THAT THIS DUEL...
...MAY WELL BE HER LAST.

MY LORDS OF THE ABYSS...
...I GIVE YOU THE SHE-WOLF, MARADA STARHAIR!
SHE IS DEAD!
YOU SAW OUR BATTLE.
THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY.
NO MATTER. ALIVE OR NOT, SHE IS A SUCCULENT MORSEL.
ALSO, WITH MARADA GONE, THE GODDESS-CHILD ARIANRHOD IS ONCE MORE VULNERABLE TO US-- AND THROUGH HER, FABLED ASHANDRIAR ITSELF!
THOU HAST DONE WELL, JAFFAR. WE ARE MOST PLEASED.

AS, NO DOUBT, THOU SHALT BE WITH OUR REWARD.
POWER IS THINE; IN FULL MEASURE! AMONGST ALL WHO SERVE THE MABDHARA. DOST THOU NOW STAND SUPREME.
I THANK THEE, MOST GRACIOUS LORDS...
... AND BID THEE FAREWELL.
ENJOY THE SHOW, STARHAIR?
YOU'RE VERY MUCH ALIVE.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND, WAS THAT ME?! AM I ALIVE, OR SOME SPIRIT GIVEN A SEMBLANCE OF LIFE?
BUT THE BEACH-- MY DEATH... ANOTHER DECEPTION?
THE MABDHARA WERE QUITE CORRECT. I AM BOTH ARROGANT AND PROUD.
NO ONE DICTATES TO ME IN MY OWN HOUSE.
AND... WE HAD SPOKEN, TOUCHED. KISSED. I, TOO, WAS STUNNED TO DISCOVER HOW LONELY I WAS, HOW MUCH JOY YOU BROUGHT INTO MY LIFE.
ARROGANCE. PRIDE. A LITTLE... LOVE. THE DEADLIEST OF COMBINATIONS.
I DETERMINED TO FIND A WAY TO EXECUTE THE MABDHARA'S WISHES, WHILE ACTUALLY THWARTING THEM. I COULDN'T TELL YOU, FOR FEAR THEY'D SEE MY WORDS IN YOUR THOUGHTS.
MY ELDRITCH BLADE CAST AN ENCHANTMENT TO PRESERVE YOUR LIFE EVEN AS IT SLEW YOU. THEN, IN SECRET, I HEALED YOUR WOUNDS AND CONJURED THE SIMULACRUM I PROFFERED TO MY LORDS. THE MATCH IS PERFECT-- IT WAS CREATED FROM YOUR OWN FLESH AND BLOOD--THEY'LL NEVER TELL THE DIFFERENCE.
I WONDER, DID IT HAVE A SOUL?
YOU CANNOT MOURN A THING THAT NEVER LIVED, MARADA.
IT WAS ME, JAFFAR.
WOULD YOU RATHER BE IN ITS PLACE?
I'VE LOST, TOO, IN A WAY. I DARE NOT KEEP YOU BY MY SIDE. I'M NOT YET READY TO CHALLENGE THE ABYSS OPENLY. MUCH AS I WOULD WISH OTHERWISE, I MUST RETURN YOU HOME.
IT WILL BREAK MY HEART TO SEE YOU GO.
Ah-- THE HEART YOU DO NOT HAVE?
I WILL MISS YOU, MARADA.


AS I WILL, YOU.
ABOARD THE MERCHANT VESSAL, RAVEN-- A DAY OUT OF ALEXANDRIA, BOUND FOR ITALY AND THE SOUTH OF FRANCE--
--MARADA HAS ONLY JUST VANISHED...
... DRAGGED INTO THE CELESTIAL VOID THAT SEPARATES WORLDS AND DIMENSIONS BY ONE OF ITS FOUL DENIZENS, PRESUMABLY TO CERTAIN, HORRIBLE DEATH. BUT BEFORE HER STEP-DAUGHTER ARIANRHOD CAN EVEN BEGIN TO THINK ABOUT RUSHING TO HER AID...
...SHE'S BACK.
MARADA!!
GODDESS BE PRAISED, I FEARED I'D NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN!
IT WAS A NEAR THING, CUB.
I'M SO SORRY, I WAS SUCH A FOOL-- I SHOULDN'T HAVE USED MY MAGIC. IF YOU'D DIED IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ALL MY FAULT, I'D HAVE NEVER FORGIVEN MYSELF, I'LL NEVER DO IT AGAIN, I PROMISE!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, ARI, I DON'T BLAME YOU. IN THE FUTURE, THOUGH, PLEASE BE MORE CAREFUL.
WHERE DID YOU GET SUCH A MAGNIFICENT GOWN, YOU LOOK LIKE A QUEEN! YOU MUST HAVE HAD A GRAND ADVENTURE.
IT HAD ITS MOMENTS.
I'LL TELL YOU OF THEM LATER.
FOR NOW, I'D LIKE TO BE ALONE.
I WAS TEMPTED TO STAY WITH HIM, WHATE'ER THE RISK. WHO KNOWS, HE MIGHT HAVE MADE ME QUEEN OF THE ENTIRE WORLD. BUT SUCH IS NOT FOR ME.
I MAY LOOK THE PART OF ROYALTY-- THE BLOOD OF PRINCES AND CAESARS MY RUN IN MY VEINS-- BUT IN MY HEART AND SOUL...
... I AM A WARRIOR.
AND WILL REMAIN SO TILL THE DAY I DIE.